



**Soccer**  
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# Deputy PM pushes for law equality



Kuwait Interior Minister visits one of the country's key installations.

## Security check

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA):** Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah called on Friday to apply law and order equally to everyone.

The General Administration of Security Relations and Media at the Ministry of Interior said in a press statement that Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef undertook a field tour that included the Operations Room (112).

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# Kuwait's Defense Minister lauds Air Force modernization efforts

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA):** Deputy Prime Minister, Defense Minister and Acting Interior Minister Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah has commended the Kuwait Air Force overhaul and modernization process, especially after the delivery of Eurofighter Typhoons and Caracal Helicopters.

The Defense Minister made this remark during an inspection tour to a number of the Kuwait Air Force and army bases on Thursday.

The new aircraft will bring about a significant transformation in the Air Force capabilities with their state-of-the-art technologies and features, he affirmed.

"It will also help strengthen and raise the level of the armed forces preparedness," he said.

During the tour, Sheikh Fahad Yousef conveyed the political leadership greetings to the army personnel on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr and the leadership's appreciation for the efforts and sacrifices they are making "for defending and protecting the sanctity of our dear homeland."

He called on the commanders of military sites to work relentlessly to bring the capabilities of army personnel to the desired levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

The Defense Minister listened to briefings from commanders of the military sites about the tasks and duties of their units and the degree of preparedness enjoyed by their members as well as the level of military cooperation and coordination between the Ministry of Defense and other military sectors in the country.

## Opinion

# Wisest of madmen to Harun Rashid: Ruling is reverence and law

By Ahmed Al-Jarallah

Editor-in-Chief, the Arab Times

OUR story dates back to the era of Harun Rashid of the Abbasid Dynasty. One day, he became despondent and was unable to enjoy his sleep for a while.

He hence asked for Bahloul, who was known as "the wisest of madmen", to be brought to him for entertainment. When Bahloul came, he noticed that the king was not feeling well.

He said, "My Lord, know that the one who is far from the reign is the king, for authority is very harmful."

The king was pleased with him, because despite what people say about Abu Wahab Bahloul bin Amr Al-Sayrafi Al-Kufi, he had a vision. It was as if he was forecasting the future, and he mixed seriousness with jesting in order to not raise concern of the Caliph.

Bahloul then asked, "Oh my lord, why don't you allow me to rule for a month?" Harun replied, "How dare you ask for this?! However, since I am aware of your integrity, I will leave the ruling to you for one day as I am going hunting tomorrow."

Thus, Bahloul became the ruler, and Harun went hunting along with his wife Zubaida and his entourage.

In the afternoon when Harun returned to his palace, he found dozens of donkeys in front of his gate. He ordered Bahloul to be brought before him and asked him about the donkeys.

Bahloul replied, "I have imposed a fine on anyone who is proven to be afraid of his wife. That is why within hours I collected such a huge number of donkeys."

Harun said, "What is this nonsense? Return the donkeys to their owners."

Bahloul replied, "Forget that, my lord. I have an important matter that concerns you. While I was walking around the city, I saw a beautiful, delicate and charming girl, and I wanted to propose to her for you, my lord."

Harun replied, "Lower your voice, you crazy person, lest Zubaida hears you."

Bahloul said, "You will then have to pay double the fine, which is two donkeys, because you are the Caliph."

At this point, the "wisest of madman" dared.

The Caliph asked: "Why did the Umayyad Dynasty fall, even though it had expanded within 93 years and became an empire?" Harun wanted to hear the answer from the madman, so he asked, "Why do you think so?"

Bahloul said, "I will borrow the words of one of the Umayyad's sons, when he was asked about the reason for the demise of their dynasty. He said, "We assigned great matters to the young, and small matters to the adults. We kept friends away due to distrust in their friendship, and

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People are led out from Westfield Shopping Centre where multiple people were stabbed in Sydney, April 13, 2024. A man stabbed six people to death at the busy Sydney shopping center Saturday before he was fatally shot, police said. (AP) - See Page 7



During the Eid Al-Fitr holidays, Marina Beach became a bustling hub of activity as people, particularly expatriates, gathered to enjoy the festivities. Kuwait's beaches draw in crowds, serving as the primary destination for many seeking relaxation and leisure during the holidays.

## Spain, Norway PMs say ready to recognize Palestine state

## Collaboration key to initiative

# Kuwaiti charity delivers much-wanted aid to Gazans

# KRCS, DNF host course for Gaza-bound doctors

## Newswatch

**BAGHDAD:** Iraq wants to build a sustainable partnership with the US based on mutual respect, and maintaining Iraq's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity, Iraqi Prime Minister **Mohammad Al-Sudani** said in a speech aired by his media office prior to his visit to **Washington** on Saturday.

The aim of Al-Sudani's visit is to discuss bilateral relations, and some regional dossiers and the war in the besieged **Gaza Strip**, the office said.

The meeting with US President **Joe Biden** would focus on conditions in the region, escalation and the joint role played in making lull and avoiding spillover of the conflict, it added. (KUNA)

Speaking to the press, Biden said that Washington was committed to defending the Israeli occupation, warning **Tehran** from carrying out any attack.

He predicted that the attack would occur "sooner than later" without providing any further details. (KUNA)

**WASHINGTON:** The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) raised alarm Thursday about a looming Islamic Group coordinated attack inside the **United States**.

"Now increasingly concerning is the potential for a coordinated attack here in the homeland, akin to the ISIS-K attack we saw at the **Russia** concert hall a couple weeks ago," Director **Christopher Wray** told the Congress today, using an acronym for the Islamic State's Afghan affiliate. (KUNA)



The Kuwaiti Relief Society distributes meat to war-afflicted families in Gaza.

# Al-Saadoun backs Amiri Decree constitutionality

By Saeed Mahmoud Saleh  
Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** The inaugural session of the 18th National Assembly will be held on April 17 in accordance with Article 87 of the Constitution despite the issuance of an Amiri decree on postponing the session until May 14 as per Article 106 of the Constitution.

MP-elect Saleh Ashour will chair the inaugural session as the oldest elected lawmaker.

The reason behind postponing the inaugural session is that the two-week grace period for holding the session after the election is not enough to form the new government, considering more than one personality have declined to head the new government.

On the other hand, some believe that Article 106 is not applicable to the inaugural session because it includes the election of parliamentary leaders, formation of committees, oath taking of the newly elected MPs, granting parliamentary immunity to the MPs, and launching of monitoring and legislation works.

They consider the postponement a hindrance to the legislative authority and a violation of Article 50 of the Constitution, which mandates the executive authority to monitor the performance of the legislature. They argued that it is unconstitutional to postpone the inaugural session, because it is not part of the urgent tasks of a caretaker government.

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**GAZA, April 13, (Agencies):** The Kuwaiti Relief Society has distributed meat to war-afflicted families in Gaza after the fasting month of Ramadan.

Omar Al-Thuwaini, the society's deputy director general, said in remarks to KUNA on Friday that the society, in coordination with the charities "Wafa" and "Rahma," distributed during the three-day Eid Al-Fitr 52 tons of meat to the poor, displaced families and those affected with the Israeli aggression on South Gaza.

The relief activity was supported by the State of Kuwait Al-Awqaf General Secretariat.

Meanwhile, "Wafa" director general Muhaisen Al-Atawneh, said 10,000 relocated families in the enclave received amounts of donated meat during the Eid. His peer at "Rahma," Mohammad Qaddous, said Kuwait, since the start of the Israeli aggression in early October, has doubled the aid sent to Gaza via the air, the land and sent in medical teams to treat the injured.

Much of the aid supplies that had been sent to Gaza or dropped from the air were cereals. The meat had been scarce in the shell-devastated and beleaguered strip.

In other news, Spain and Norway's Prime Ministers affirmed Friday that

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**KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA):** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Chairman Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer affirmed on Saturday the society's continuous efforts to improve humanitarian work, especially by training and equipping doctors to operate effectively in hostile and hazardous environments.

Dr. Al-Sayer spoke during the launch of a specialized training course for over 30 doctors and anesthesiologists, in collaboration with the David Nott Foundation (DNF), aiming to prepare them to support the Gaza Strip's collapsed medical sector lasting five days.

This collaboration signifies a crucial aspect of their dedication to consistent humanitarian efforts, he said, clarifying its goal to equip and train a group of doctors who have volunteered their time to acquire the necessary skills and experience to respond to medical emergencies in conflict zones.

This inaugural course in the Middle East shows the collective dedication to maintaining high medical care standards in challenging conditions, while also honoring the noble call to serve humanity through knowledge sharing, with the presence of Dr. David Nott, co-founder of the David Nott Foundation, symbolizing this dedication to ethical cooperation in their shared humanitarian mission.

On his side, Dr. Nott emphasized from his experience as a surgeon in disaster-stricken areas the importance of training and sharing information for handling medical cases during humanitarian crises, stating that this course aims to prepare participants for active involvement in wartime medical cases and various surgical procedures.

Dr. Nott witnessed the severe challenges during his time as a medical surgeon in Rafah city, southern Gaza, between January and February of this year, describing the dire humanitarian situation residents faced, including untreated medical cases, severe

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Participants pose for a group photo at the launch of a specialized training course, preparing over 30 doctors and anesthesiologists for their mission in Gaza.

## Prayer Timings

Fajr .....	04:03	Asr .....	15:23
Sunrise ..	05:25	Maghrib ..	18:13
Zohr .....	11:49	Isha .....	19:32

# Local

**Expected weather for next 24 hrs:**  
**By Day:** Rather hot with light to moderate northwesterly wind changing to southeasterly wind later on, with speeds of 08-28 km/h.

## Weather

**By Night:** Mild and partly cloudy with light to moderate southeasterly wind to light variable wind, with speeds of 08-30 km/h.

Station	Max Exp	Min Rec
Kuwait City	33	23

Kuwait Airport	33	19
Abdaly	23	18
Jahra	33	20
Salmiyah	29	24
Nuwaisib	31	18
Wafra	33	19

BIOMETRIC/FINGERPRINT APPOINTMENT: <https://meta.e.gov.kw/En/>

## Kuwait's citizens, residents perform Eid prayers

# Kuwait Amir congratulates Qatar's Father Amir on Eid Al-Fitr

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday phoned Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani to congratulate him on Eid Al-Fitr.

During the phone call, His Highness the Amir wished the two sisterly states and the Arab and Muslim worlds, happy returns of this dear occasion. He also wished Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad everlasting wellbeing.

For his part, Qatar's Father Amir Sheikh Hamad thanked His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal on the good gesture which showed the depth of relations between the two sisterly states and wished him everlasting wellness.

He also wished Kuwait further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

### Saudi King, Crown Prince

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah spoke to Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman Al-Saud on Wednesday midday to congratulate King Salman bin Abdulaziz and the Crown Prince on Eid Al-Fitr.

His Highness the Amir voiced hope for more progress and prosperity for the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under the wise leadership of King Salman.

On his part, Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman thanked His Highness the Amir for initiating the phone call which materializes the depth of relations between the two sisterly countries.

He wished His Highness Amir everlasting wellbeing and Kuwait more prosperity and progress under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, the Head of the Supreme Judicial Council, the Head of the Court of Cassation, Counselor Dr. Adel Majid Bouresli and other top officials performed Eid Al-Fitr prayers at the State Grand Mosque.

### Eid Al-Fitr prayers

Citizens and residents of Kuwait gathered in the early hours of the morning Wednesday to perform Eid Al-Fitr prayers, amidst a spiritual and joyful atmosphere.

People of all ages greeted each other as they gathered in mosques and playgrounds for Eid Al-Fitr prayer.

### Info minister

Minister of Information and Culture Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi congratulated Wednesday His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait on Eid Al-Fitr.

The minister expressed best wishes and prayers on the blessed occasion, wishing many returns for Arab and Muslim nations.

## Kuwaiti stabbed

# Noose tightened on customs employees

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Abdullah Al-Jouan, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, has instructed the Director of the General Administration of Customs to revamp the system for recording departure fingerprints for shift workers, reports Al-Rai daily.

Under the new directive, employees will be required to register their fingerprints every 6 hours during their shifts, with three fingerprints needed for a 12-hour work period.

According to sources, the Director of Customs has disseminated the updated fingerprinting protocol among the administration's staff, with the implementation slated to commence on May 1, 2024.

Insiders revealed to Al-Rai that this decision, set to take effect on May 1, aims to enhance the precision and efficiency of tracking working hours, ensuring the punctuality of employees throughout their shifts.

The new system mandates the recording of attendance and departure fingerprints, along with a mid-shift check-in.

Furthermore, the decision addresses existing challenges in adhering to shift schedules, citing factors such as the lack of accommodation for employees working under the 48-hour work and 96-hour rest system in remote customs ports (Salmi, Abdali, Nuwaiseeb, and Khubari Al-Awazem), as well as the 24-hour work and 48-hour rest system for nearby customs areas (air freight, Sulaibiya, vegetable market, customs warehouses, and sea ports).

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**Kuwaiti stabbed:** Personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department are looking for an unidentified person for stabbing a Kuwaiti citizen born in 1998, reports Al-Anba daily.

A security source told Al-Anba, after a report was received by the Jahra Operations Room at 3:15 am, Friday, a patrol was directed to the site of the report and it was found that the injured person was suffering from severe to moderate injuries.

Upon questioning the injured person stated that he was in his vehicle in the Al-Mutlaa area, kilometer 10, with his friend, who is residing in the country illegally, and that he stabbed him with a knife after a dispute, and then he took him to Al-Jahra Hospital, threw him in front of the hospital gate and escaped. The medical report shows a deep wound in the right forearm, another deep wound in the left forearm and suspected severing of the right brachial artery, and abrasions and bruises in the feet.

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**Drug peddlers held:** Personnel from the Criminal Investigation Department have arrested two young men for promoting drugs.

The Al-Seyassah daily said the suspects were taken into custody in the Taima area, in possession of approximately 100,000 Lyrica pills and special tools for manufacturing narcotic pills.

A security source said a patrol car affiliated to the Public Security Sector suspected a car parked in the Taima area, and after approaching it, the man behind the wheel and his companion tried to escape, but they were chased and arrested after intense resistance.

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**'Be vigilant, cautious':** Undersecretary of the National Guard Lieutenant General Eng Hashim Al-Rifai has stressed the need for members of the Second Facilities Protection Battalion to be vigilant, cautious, follow the instructions, and perform the security duties assigned to them in order to maintain the country's security and stability, reports Al-Anba daily.

In a press statement, the National Guard disclosed that Al-Rifai made the statement when he visited the Second Facilities Protection Battalion whose members are in charge of securing the National Control Center. He greeted them on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr.

He also conveyed to them the Eid Al-Fitr greetings and wishes for blessings of National Guard Chief His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah and his deputy Sheikh Faisal Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



Young and old came out to pray the Eid prayers early in the morning on Wednesday, April 10 with parents, relatives and friends. Eid is a festival marked by Muslims after a whole month's fasting during the daytime. It also brings together people, relatives, friends and neighbors.

Photo by Mohammad Morsi

# 'National Movement' established

Commitment to democracy pledged by 31 public figures

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The establishment of the National Movement, comprising 31 prominent public figures, marks a significant development in Kuwait's political landscape. In their statement, they underscored the movement's commitment to democracy as a fundamental human principle, beginning with the individual and encompassing all segments of society, reports Al-Qabas daily.**

Central to the movement's agenda is political reform, starting with electoral system amendments aimed at fostering advanced democracy and ensuring effective freedom.

Moreover, it emphasizes economic revitalization through income source diversification, state finance reform, corruption eradication, and bolstering education as a cornerstone for future prosperity. The movement also advocates for safeguarding the middle class and enhancing citizens' living standards.

### Platform

Notably, the National Movement positions itself as a platform for aspiring reformers dedicated to advancing Kuwait politically, economically, and socially. It aspires to facilitate objective popular oversight over decision-making bodies, particularly the legislative and executive branches, striving to establish a political equilibrium that prioritizes national interests above all else.

Crucially, the statement reaffirms the sanctity of the Kuwaiti Constitution as the bedrock of citizenship rights. Any suggestion of suspending or undermining it risks regressing to past eras marred by economic crises and existential threats, underscoring the movement's commitment to upholding constitutional principles for the nation's welfare and prosperity.

### Signed

The statement was signed by the following personalities -- Ahmad Mohammad Al-Shehbi, Dr Iqbal Nasser Al-Othaimeen, Ibrahim Qais Al-Ghafli, Dr Turki Nayef Al-Azmi, Hamed Youssef Al-Badr, Hammoud Khalifa Al Majed, Hammoud Sanad Sindh, Khaled Ibrahim Al-Salal, Khaled Abdul Mohsen Al-Ibrahim, Khalifa Khalid Al Khalifa, Dr Khalil Abdullah Al-Awadi, Dr Sami Abdul Aziz Al Mana, Suad Fahd Al-Mojil, Saud Sabah Al-Hendal, Sultan Musaed Al-Jazzaf, Dhari Tariq Al-Sabbagh, Abdul Hamid Muhammad Al Zamil, Abdul Aziz Fahd Al-Areiman, Abdullah Dashti, Abdul Wahab Salman Al-Nisf, Saleh Muhammad Al-Mulla, Othman Abdul Aziz Al Masoud, Othman Abdul Mohsen Al Othman, Mallouh al-Fadhli, Ali Adel Al Balushi, Fahd Muhammad Al-Najdi, Faisal Abdullah Al-Baridi, Faisal Mohammed Al-Ruwaihel, Muhammad Hamad Bughailth and Youssef Muhammad Al-Shehbi.

# Over 21,000 traffic violations in week; 130 cars impounded

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: In compliance with the instructions of Assistant Undersecretary for Operations and Traffic Affairs at the Ministry of Interior Major General Yousef Al-Khadda, the Traffic Sector carried out a week-long campaign that resulted in the issuance of 21,858 citations for various violations; impounding of 130 vehicles; arrest of 48 violators and reckless persons; referral of 23 juveniles to the Juvenile Prosecution; arrest of 12 persons wanted by law for involvement in security and criminal cases; and six others for the possession and consumption of narcotic substances, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Officer in the Public Relations and Traffic Awareness Unit at the General Traffic Department (GTD) Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah Bu Hassan disclosed that the Traffic Sector had earlier laid down an integrated traffic and security plan; covering all roundabouts, main roads, highways and external roads to ensure the smooth flow of traffic in the last week of Ramadan.

He revealed that certain roads witnessed major traffic jams; especially those near the mosques, worship places, commercial complexes and public markets.

He said the continuous field monitoring indicated an increase in the number of reckless drivers including juveniles who were driving without a license before the breaking of fast.

He added the plan was implemented through the coordinated efforts of the traffic departments in the six governorates, Traffic Operations Department, Special Traffic Tasks Department and Traffic Investigation Department.

He affirmed that the traffic and rescue patrols from various departments controlled the security and traffic situation in front of mosques, places of worship, complexes and markets.

He stated that they arrested reckless people in residential areas and other locations throughout the country; in addition to the issuance of 21,000 traffic citations and impounding of 130 vehicles. He added serious traffic violations were uncovered, such as reckless driving, speeding and intentional disruption of traffic movement, particularly in front of commercial complexes.

He confirmed the traffic and rescue personnel arrested 23 juveniles for driving without a license, impounded 25 illegal motorcycles, nabbed some motorcycle riders who drove beyond the speed limit and performed stunts on the roads, and 48 individuals were arrested for recklessness on the roads. All those arrested were taken to the detention centers of the General Traffic Department, he added.

He went on to say that 12 persons wanted by law for involvement in security and criminal cases were arrested and referred to the Sentences Enforcement General Department; while six others were arrested for the consumption of narcotics with narcotic substances and drug paraphernalia in their possession. These six individuals were referred to the Drug Control General Department.



Citizens and residents turned up with their children at many recreation points in Kuwait on the first and second day of Eid. The children spend their 'Eidiya' at parks, buying eatables and toys.

Photo by Samer Shaqir

## Other Voices

# Why not face reality of life?

By Ahmad alsarraf

Many things have deteriorated in recent years, and artistic, cultural and literary works were among the victims of this deterioration. The level of creativity declined, in text and representation, and some saw that this decline was represented by the series "One Wife is Not Enough," as it harms the reputation of the Kuwaiti society. Its production and direction were entirely done abroad. Those who did this were careful not to mention any relationship to the events of the series or to link it dramatically to Kuwaiti society, other than the dialect of some of its actors.

The uproar around the series prompted the "oversight" authorities in the Ministry of Information to refer everyone who participated in it -- writing, producing, directing and acting (14 artists and writers of the series) -- to the prosecution, and the fair judiciary will have its say.

What happened later was surprising to some, as the "media" chose to position itself as an opponent and an arbiter, and based on the decision to refer the participants in that series to the prosecution, it instructed the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters to take an arbitrary decision not to authorize any artistic work "in the future", to be included in the work team any of those who have previously worked or had a role in the series "One Wife is Not Enough (!). The children's play "In the Zein of Time" was affected by the moratorium decision, on the grounds that some of its participants had previously participated in the offensive series!

What happened, in the eyes of some, constituted an abuse of the artist's role, and showed the lack of the NC-CAL awareness of its role, when it resorted to collective punishment and harmed those who had nothing to do

with the production of the offensive series. So how can we repeat, in our literature, that a female servant should not bear the burden of another, but when it comes to applying this human rule, it becomes a matter of mood?

Therefore, we turn to our brother, the Minister of Information, to solve this problem that is often created from within the ministry, and to direct officials to devote themselves to improving the quality of work, enriching the arena with valuable offers, and presenting a purposeful artistic alternative.

Question: What if the judiciary acquitted the producers, directors and actors of the series "One Wife Is Not Enough" of the charges against them? Is this possible because the series is produced and starred by a foreigner? What if they file a compensation claim against the relevant government agency that damaged their reputation?

A relative of mine, years ago, volunteered to work with a women's association. She had previously allocated a headline number to answer calls, of unknown origin, that the association received, related to the events that some people were exposed to. A week later, my relative was shocked and left the job, because of what she heard about things you never imagined existed or would happen in our society, which some believe is so virtuous!

We are part of this world, and the closest to societies, whose members have been exposed to severe family shocks as a result of their situation changing to another in a very short period. The enormous wealth that fell upon many changed the souls and made every forbidden thing permissible in the eyes of the deprived. Drugs, lack of community and school awareness, and the spread of ignorance contributed to the expansion of all evils.

All attempts to "discipline" those who seek to shed light on the truth about the "ethics" of our societies are doomed to failure. The solution lies in the scientific and modern confrontation of these dangerous and deadly problems, and not in denying their existence!

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# diwaniya ديوانية

A DIGEST OF PUBLIC OPINION

## People want Fahd Al-Yousef to remain at helm of affairs

"As law enforcement efforts intensified in previous years, particularly regarding issues like encroachments on state property during the Al-Badr era and traffic violations during Abdel Fattah's tenure, a wave of agitation swept through society. The voices of violators, their supporters, and those opposing law enforcement grew louder, echoing across various spheres," columnist **Iqbal Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Qabas** daily.

"Subsequently, mounting pressure was exerted on government leaders responsible for these appointments, urging their removal from their roles. Regrettably, they acquiesced, for reasons unknown. Some distanced themselves, while others were dismissed. However, corruption persisted, camouflaging itself under the guise of humility and an assertion that their clamor was unheard.

"Today, Kuwait finds itself in a similar milieu. A minister, loyal to his country and dedicated to his duties, recognizes the imperative to uproot corruption. He initiated sweeping reforms within his ministry, propelled by the unwavering support of the leadership, epitomized by His Highness the Amir and his Prime Minister.

"As the Acting Minister of the Interior, Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, set the cleaning process in motion, dissenting voices grew frantic, resorting to threats and intimidation. They trembled at the prospect of losing their ill-gotten gains amassed through flagrant violations, facilitated by their connections.

"These individuals unlawfully appropriated privileges not rightfully theirs, aware of their wrongdoing yet emboldened by the laxity of the law. They counted on supporters to raise a clamor, aiming to undermine law enforcement efforts, a tactic they have sadly succeeded in deploying numerous times.

"Amidst this era of resolute commitment to law and order, a pertinent question arises: Will these dissenting voices succeed, as they did in the past, in ousting figures like Al-Badr and Abdel Fattah (albeit retaining their titles)? Will they succeed in removing those whose presence signifies a nascent return to a clean, principled Kuwait, where respect flows from elders to youth, and citizens honor the rule of law?

"The true Kuwaiti populace rejects such threats, resoundingly declaring their support for Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef's tenure. They demand his permanence in the Ministry of Interior, allowing him the uninterrupted focus to advance his noble mission of national rejuvenation.

"In this peculiar landscape of Kuwait, where adherence to the law sparks protest, and calls for its defiance ring loud, the anomaly is stark. A minister's commitment to enforcing the law is met with vehement opposition, with demands for his removal in favor of a more compliant successor.

"The real Kuwaiti people want Minister Fahd Al-Yousef to remain..."

**Note:** This article was written before the latest Cabinet developments.

### Also:

"The recent statements and actions from newly elected members of the National Assembly have been characterized by extreme rhetoric and fanaticism. These statements not only violate the provisions of the Constitution but also defy logic, prudence, and basic decency," columnist **Dr Muhammad Al-Maqatei** wrote for **Al-Jarida** daily.

"They represent a triple offense: breaching constitutional norms, engaging in demagoguery divorced from rationality, and displaying a lack of respect and decorum.

"What's alarming is the haste with which these members have rushed to defend individuals accused of forging, falsifying, or duplicating nationality data. This has sparked a flurry of explanations, interpretations, accusations, and suspicions among the public regarding the motives of these newly elected officials.

"Why are these members so eager to defend individuals involved in such serious allegations? Is it to fulfill the orders of powerful figures to shield themselves from potential scrutiny? To protect family members implicated in these matters? Or is it to defend corrupt individuals who have engaged in the buying and selling of citizenships? These simplistic explanations fall short in this context.

"It's evident that there are orchestrated efforts and coordination behind these statements. This goes beyond mere reactions to recent events; it's a calculated struggle behind the scenes.

"The individuals pulling the strings behind these scenes, exerting significant influence, are no longer concealed. This struggle reflects internal power dynamics within the ruling family, aimed at consolidating power and influence and securing prominent positions within the country's leadership.

"However, this internal conflict has spilled over, leading to attacks on the government and erosion of constitutional principles. It has caused widespread distrust in the leadership and its ability to govern effectively.

"It's imperative to quell this internal strife within the ruling family and curb its disruptive influence. Delay or

complacency is no longer an option. Kuwait's stability, security, and future are at stake, particularly in the face of rampant political opportunism and disregard for constitutional principles.

"Much of what passes for politics nowadays is tainted by corruption, with politicians exploiting state institutions and blackmailing officials for personal gain. This has led to a hollowing out of state institutions and a erosion of public trust.

"Addressing this crisis requires bold and unprecedented intervention. It won't be easy, and it will come with its share of challenges. But it's essential to halt the infighting within the ruling family and expose the political agitators hiding behind it. May we find the courage and wisdom to navigate these turbulent waters and emerge stronger on the other side."

"The National Assembly caused the deterioration of our situation... The opposition has returned to control the Assembly, paving the way for a new confrontation between the legislative and executive authorities and the ruler, as the crisis representatives have returned to their usual behavior in the Assembly. It is possible that the Assembly will be dissolved after a short period due to the difficulty of coexisting with a legislature that puts challenging the government and obstructing the latter's work on top of its priorities," columnist **Ahmad Al-Dawaas** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"The Assembly may also resort to creating various crises with the government, and flooding the latter with interrogations and demands for responses, as the opposition will have the loudest voice after the recent election.

"His Highness the Amir, may Allah protect him, previously confirmed that he would not tolerate the continuation of conflict between the two authorities, because it would harm the interests of the country and its people.

"Crises may continue between the Council of Ministers and Assembly, unless a new prime minister is appointed or the government issues a package of popular decisions related to improving the lives of citizens.

"Kuwait used to be the 'Pearl of the Gulf'. It had civilization and developmental achievements, even without a legislature at the time. Its conditions deteriorated after the formation of the National Assembly. The setback happened after the implementation of the 1962 Constitution, when the legislators of the Constitution feared the tyranny of the authority over it, so they strengthened it with a strange exaggeration that made the powers of the Assembly absolute and limitless in terms of legislation, oversight, accountability, dismissal, and even the power to violate the Constitution and the laws of the State saying, 'The Assembly is the master of its decisions.' All of these powers came through one legislative chamber.

"We are hoping for a temporary dissolution of the legislature for a few months or a few years. The Constitution is not a book from heaven. The interests of the country and its people are more important. At the same time, we should form a 'Council of Notables', consisting of good and competent nationals who can solve the country's problems.

"The United Arab Emirates has no elected parliament, yet it is progressing rapidly every day. It has gained the respect of the world, up to the point that Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, wrote a poem with the following phrase: 'Victory and leadership will always be ours on a morning filled with sores.' This is a clear example of how the country is progressing without a parliament.

"What is the matter with my country, Kuwait, that has failed to take the lead?"

"Settle it... This was confirmed by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may Allah prolong his life and keep him as the support and asset of the honorable people of Kuwait. As soon as the Ministry of Information announced the date of His Highness' speech, the citizens began anticipating this date to hear reassurance about the future of the coming generations. They are certain that HH the Amir of firmness and determination was one of the first to preserve national identity and protect it from tampering," **Sheikh Ali Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad** wrote for **Al-Seyassah** daily.

"When he said it without opening his mouth, he relieved all his loyal people. It was an indirect order to His Excellency, the Minister of Interior, to continue what he started and rid the country of foreigners wherever they may be.

"Thank you, sir, for all the advice and guidance you have given to your children for the common good.

"We congratulate our representatives, wishing them success in playing an effective role in the interest of the public, while preventing tension and crises without interfering in governmental affairs, so that the National Assembly can continue its work. There is no harm in us repeating what we said and being true to our expectation of dissolving the last Assembly before a year passed. We say to those who were unlucky: Follow the sessions of the representatives. Do not go far, and be prepared either to reserve your temporary positions or for your positions to be fixed in your homes, to remind you of the proverb, 'Beware of the evil of the forbearing one when he gets angry.'

— **Compiled by PFX Fernandes**



KUNA photo  
Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Marshal Bandar Al-Mezyen talking to the Kuwaiti troops at the base.

## Kuwait Army chief visits military sites

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Army Air Marshal Bandar Al-Mezyen visited Mubarak Duty Force and a site of the Skyguard air defense system recently.

During the tour, Air Marshal Al-Mezyen praised the high morale, efficiency and vigilance of the Army personnel and their preparedness to discharge the missions entrusted to them, according to a press release from the General Staff.

He conveyed to the personnel the Mubarak Duty Force and the air defense company the greetings of the political and

military leadership on the occasion of the holy Eid Al-Fitr.

Expressing his best wishes for the military personnel, Air Marshal Al-Mezyen asked them to maintain the high level of preparedness to maintain the security and stability of the homeland under the leadership of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Air Marshal Al-Mezyen was accompanied by assistants to the Chief of Staff Maj-Gen. Mohammad Majed and Maj-Gen. Khaled Al-Shu'ala.

## E-gadgets, games replace traditional children's toys

'Need to monitor young minds'

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: In the ever-evolving landscape of children's entertainment, traditional games find themselves overshadowed by the allure of electronic counterparts, marking a significant shift noted by proprietors of children's toy stores. In a recent survey conducted by "Al-Rai," owners shared insights on sales trends, demand dynamics, pricing structures, and the prevailing popularity of various games.

As children eagerly anticipate Eid celebrations, the tradition of gifting games takes on a special significance, ushering in joyous moments and festive spirits. However, amidst the digital age, characterized by a proliferation of electronic diversions, traditional games seem to have lost their erstwhile charm. Store proprietors observe a notable transition in children's preferences, with electronic games assuming a predominant role in their leisure pursuits. While acknowledging the educational value and cognitive benefits of certain electronic offerings, concerns arise regarding content appropriateness and its potential influence on impressionable young minds. Vigilance in monitoring screen time becomes imperative, safeguarding against adverse effects on both physical well-being and psychological development.

Beyond mere amusement, games serve as invaluable tools for learning, skill acquisition, problem-solving, and intellectual growth—a sentiment echoed by store owners advocating for a balanced approach to gaming. Despite the ascendancy of digital counterparts, traditional toys continue to hold relevance, particularly during festive seasons, underscoring the enduring appeal of tangible playthings.

As prices experience an upward trajectory, mirroring broader economic trends, consumer preferences lean towards newer releases, reflective of children's innate

### 2-car crash

#### 1 dead, three hurt

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Thursday evening, medical emergency teams swiftly responded to a two-vehicle collision and subsequent fire on the King Fahd Highway. Tragically, the accident led to the loss of one life and caused injuries to three people, reports Al-Anba daily.

Efficiently managing the situation, the firefighting teams worked diligently to extinguish the fire and provide assistance to those involved. Once the incident was effectively addressed, the scene was handed over to the appropriate authorities for further investigation and follow-up.

curiosity and inclination towards novelty. Despite economic nuances influencing purchasing decisions, the intrinsic value of play remains undiminished, fostering creativity, camaraderie, and cognitive development in the formative years.

In navigating the evolving landscape of children's entertainment, toy store owners remain committed to adapting to changing preferences while preserving the essence of play—a timeless pursuit transcending technological advancements.

**Man dies in airport:** An Egyptian died in the departure area at Kuwait International Airport recently, reports Al-Rai daily quoting a security source.

The source told the daily that the competent authorities at the airport received a report about a traveler who fell ill, so the emergency medical personnel rushed to the departure area. The sick traveler, an Egyptian, was taken to the airport clinic where he was declared dead.

The source added that the investigator ordered the registration of a case and the Egyptian's body was taken to Forensics to determine the cause of death.

### Clouds to appear

## Hot weather midday, moderate in evening

KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA): Weekend forecast weather will be hot in midday and moderate at night, said the meteorological department. Director of the Dept. Abdulaziz Al-Karawi said to KUNA that the country was affected by northwesterly wind, resulting in humidity in areas near the coast. The midday temperature is expected to reach 34 degrees and 21 degrees at night, with northwesterly winds at 8-32 km/h in speed.

The next day, the midday temperature is expected to reach 34 degrees with northwesterly winds at 8-40 km/h in speed, and 20 degrees at night with northwesterly winds at 8-32 km/h in speed.

About Saturday weather, Al-Qarawi said that the midday temperature is expected to reach 36 degrees with scattered clouds and northwesterly winds at 8-40 km/h in speed, while it reaches 20 degrees at night.



Modified car exhausts found in a garage.

## Cars with noisy exhaust systems seized by GTD

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: In response to complaints about noisy vehicles, the General Traffic Department conducted a rigorous inspection campaign within the Jahra Industrial Estate. The aim was to curb the nuisance caused by vehicles emitting loud exhaust sounds, along with addressing any alterations to the vehicles' original appearance. As per a statement released by the General Department of Security Relations and Media, the campaign yielded 110 traffic violations, with two vehicles impounded at the traffic garage for their noisy exhaust systems, reports Al-Anba daily.

Furthermore, the inspection team also discovered illegal gas tanks in one of the garages, underscoring the importance of such campaigns in ensuring public safety and adherence to regulations.

## 2.5 mln 'drug pills' worth millions seized in 3 mths

By Munif Naif

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: In the last three months, officers from the Drug Control General Department were able to seize 2.5 million narcotic pills of various types, ten kilograms of dangerous chemicals, 14 kilograms of crystal meth (shabu), 920 kilograms of hashish, and 14 thousand bottles of imported liquor. The value of the seized items is estimated at millions of dinars.

According to a security source, the efforts of these officers, under the guidance of the Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs Major General Hamid Al-Dawas and the Director General of the department Brigadier General Muhammad Qabazard, resulted in curbing the trade and peddling of narcotic substances and confronting them by all means.

He highlighted the referral to the Public Prosecution five customs employees in two separate cases for facilitating the entry of narcotic substances into the country through the airport and Salmi port. The source explained that one of the most prominent seizures was that of one million Larica pills that were being brought in through the airport. Two Kuwaiti citizens were arrested in this regard.

Another important seizure was the confiscation of 350 kilograms of hashish that was coming from Iran via sea. About four Iranians, a Kuwaiti citizen, and an Egyptian were arrested in this case. The source affirmed that the anti-narcotics detective teams are continuing investigations and collecting information to arrest smugglers and drug dealers by tracking their movements and monitoring them.

He said the campaigns to confront this dangerous scourge are launched based on the instructions of the Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Minister of Defense and Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef.



Photo by Mahmoud Morsi  
Gold bangles on display at one of the shops.

### Owner faces legal action

## Team tours gold shops, detects some violations

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The Farwaniya Emergency Team at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry conducted an inspection tour in a number of shops selling gold jewelry in Farwaniya to ensure their compliance with applicable decisions and laws, reports Al-Anba daily.

This is part of the extensive inspection tours carried out by the ministry's supervisory teams.

The recent inspection led to the discovery of the violation of one gold shop -- failure to provide data on the price of gold per karat and the price of workmanship. Legal measures were taken against the owner of the shop.

عيد الفطري  
Eid-Al-Fitr

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# Energy crisis looms as electricity production 'stagnant' for 4 years

'MEW need to take action in new government formation'

By Mohammed Ghanem

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** According to informed sources, it has been exactly four years since the launch of the project to install a combined cycle gas turbine at Subbiya Power Station with a production capacity of 932 megawatts on April 7, 2021.

They explained that the ministry, since that date, has not added a single megawatt to the electricity network. The total production of electrical energy in the country stopped at 18,500 megawatts from all stations affiliated with the ministry. Stopping productivity at this number is not in line with the steady annual population increase and the government expansion in establishing new residential cities that need large amounts of electrical energy as a basic service to be provided for any new urban community.



Dr Al-Hajraf

## Failure

The stability of electricity productivity and the failure to establish new production stations and projects have exacerbated the problem and turned it into a real crisis that will prevent the ministry from being able to fully guarantee the continuity of these supplies and deal with the inability to confront the deficit in providing this necessary and vital service, and the smallest negative consequences caused in the country when it is interrupted.

The signs of the crisis had already begun during the summer of 2023, with loads reaching very high levels and power outages occurring in some areas of the country, either sudden or arranged by the ministry.

The sources warned of the continuation of the

## 'Distillers out of service'

# MEW uses strategic water reserve due to 'rising consumption' rates

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** As water consumption rates continue to rise, because distillers are out of service for periodic maintenance; the Ministry of Electricity and Water started using the strategic reserve, especially since the difference reached about 43 million imperial gallons last week, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources.

Sources revealed that fresh water consumption is distributed across residential and investment sectors, and that citizens constitute 86.04 percent (79,119) of the total freshwater customers. The percentage of investment housing is 7.60 percent, followed by commercial housing with 4.35 percent, other types of housing like cabins and chalets with 1.11 percent, industrial housing with 0.41 percent, agricultural with 0.32 percent, and government with 0.17 percent.

Sources said the total capacity of the fresh

water distillation station units is 682 million imperial gallons per day, through the station units whose capacity ranges from five to 15 million imperial gallons per day for each unit and each station.

Sources pointed out that a number of distilleries are still under maintenance as scheduled, which usually end at the beginning of the peak season.

In another development, the ministry announced the complete restoration of power to Blocks Five and Six in Salmiya after the recent disruption, as four sub-feeders at the main sub-station 'Al-Ras M' were out of service.

The ministry affirmed that the emergency teams were immediately dispatched to the affected locations and the necessary repairs were made until power was restored.

situation that will leave the ministry with huge deficits of electrical energy in the coming years, especially since the delay in the ministry's power station projects (Subbiya to produce 1,150 megawatts, and Nuwaiseeb Station to produce 3,600 megawatts), and the projects of the Public-Private Partnership Projects Authority (Zour North Station for producing 2,700 megawatts and Khairan Station for producing 1,800 megawatts), which did not exceed eight percent.

## Action

They stressed the need for the Minister of Electricity and Water to take action in the new government formation.

Dr. Salem Falah Al-Hajraf and others stressed the need to move quickly and develop urgent plans to avoid crises by addressing the obstacles that lead to delay in the completion of energy production projects to meet the demand

for electricity specified for them, instead of resorting to patchwork solutions such as allocating a budget to purchase energy from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, as it happened in the expired budget which allocated KD 30 million for this purpose and obtained approvals to contract with international companies to supply electrical energy if necessary.

The sources indicated that the ministry will skip the 2024 summer season in light of the very difficult challenges and risks due to limited productivity and expectations of high levels of loads during the summer.

They said, "Last summer, the country recorded the highest rates in the history of Kuwait at 16,500 megawatts. The maximum load will reach 17,250 megawatts during next summer, according to the ministry's expectations."



KUNA photo

Kuwait's Ambassador to South Africa during the presentation of his credentials.

## Kuwait envoy to S. Africa presents credentials

Ambassador Salem Al-Shebli presented on Tuesday his credentials as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the State of Kuwait to the Republic of South Africa to the republic's President Cyril Ramaphosa.

The State of Kuwait Embassy in Pretoria said in a statement that the Kuwaiti ambassador conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the president, wishing him, good health, lasting progress and prosperity for the South African government and people.

Ambassador Al-Shebli expressed the State of Kuwait's keenness on beefing up the bilateral relations and boosting cooperation in various fields between the two friendly countries. (KUNA)

## Eid Al-Fitr

# HH Amir receives greetings

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA):** Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi expressed sincere congratulations to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah on Eid Al-Fitr.

The minister voiced, in a press release on Thursday, best wishes for the Arab and Muslim nations, saying this blissful occasion is reminiscent of solidarity among all Muslims around the globe.

On the modernization of the health facilities, he said the process is well underway in coordination among all sectors of the Ministry of Health thanks to the dedicated staffers of the ministry.

Dr. Al-Awadhi appreciated the efforts made by the medical staff during the Eid holidays.



## UAE

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal on Tuesday received a phone call from UAE President Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan expressing heartfelt congratulations on Eid Al-Fitr.

The UAE president hoped that the happy occasion would recur with all bounties and blessings for the two countries, gracious peoples, and the Arab and Muslim nations and wished His Highness the Amir very good health.

His Highness the Amir expressed gratitude to the UAE president for the gracious gesture that depicted the depth of the relations between the two brotherly countries and peoples and expressed felicitations to the UAE president on the happy occasion, wishing him very good health.

He has also wished the sisterly UAE State and its gracious people will see that their aspirations for progress and prosperity have been attained under the wise leadership of His Highness.

Also, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal received Eid Al-Fitr greetings from Sheikh Humaid bin Rashid Al Nuaimi, the ruler of Ajman Emirate, the UAE, in a phone call on Thursday.

Sheikh Humaid wished His Highness the Amir everlasting wellbeing and both sisterly countries more prosperity and progress.

His Highness the Amir thanked him for initiating the cordial phone conversation, which reflects the strength of the relationship between the State of Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.



## Iraq

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad received a phone call from the Iraqi President, Dr. Abdul Latif Jamal Rashid, the President of the Republic of Iraq.

During the call, the Iraqi president expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr.

His Highness the Amir thanked him for this generous gesture that embodies the depth of relations between the two countries and the two brotherly peoples.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Wednesday a phone call from Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammad Al-Soudani.

In the call, the Iraqi prime minister congratulated His Highness the Amir on the occasion of Eid Al-Fitr, ex-

pressing best wishes and prayers on the blessed occasion, wishing many returns for the two countries, Arab and Muslim nations.

In turn, His Highness the Amir thanked the Iraqi prime minister for this kind gesture, which reflects the deep-rooted ties between the two countries.



## Qatar

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad received Tuesday evening a telephone call from Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, expressing sincere congratulations and wishes to the Amir on Eid al-Fitr.

In the call, Sheikh Tamim hoped many happy returns of this good occasion for the two countries, and Muslim and Arab nations. He also wished everlasting health for His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir thanked Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim for this good initiative, which embodies the deep-rooted ties between the two countries and their peoples.

His Highness Sheikh Mishal also congratulated Sheikh Tamim on the same occasion, wishing him everlasting wellbeing, and further progress and prosperity to Qatar under his wise leadership.



## Egypt

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad on Tuesday received a phone call from Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi expressing heartfelt congratulations on Eid Al-Fitr.

President Al-Sisi hoped that the happy occasion would recur with all bounties and blessings for the two countries, gracious peoples, the Arab and Muslim nations and wished His Highness the Amir very good health.

His Highness the Amir expressed gratitude to the Egyptian president for the gracious gesture that depicted the depth of the relations between the two brotherly countries and peoples and expressed felicitations to President Al-Sisi on the happy occasion, wishing him very good health.

He has also wished the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt and its gracious people will see that their aspirations for progress and prosperity have been attained under the wise leadership of his Excellency.



## Pakistan

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah received a telephone call from his Pakistani counterpart Shehbaz Sharif on Eid al-Fitr.

During the call, Sharif expressed his sincere congratulations to His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Sabah on Eid, hoping many happy returns of this occasion for the two countries and Muslim nation.

In addition, the two premiers reviewed the bilateral relations, and means of boosting them in all fields in a manner that serves the common interests



## KUNA

Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) congratulated Wednesday His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and the people of Kuwait on Eid Al-Fitr.

KUNA expressed best wishes and prayers on the blessed occasion, wishing many returns for Arab and Muslim nations.

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# EID AL FITR

Special Promotion

## Room Promotion

1<sup>st</sup> day of Eid – until 19<sup>th</sup> of April 2024

<b>Book for One-night</b> (Inclusive of breakfast)	Queen Cabana (2 persons). 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons).	<b>BHD 76.230 net</b> <b>BHD 170.247 net</b>
<b>Book for Two nights and get 15% discount</b> (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)	Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.	<b>BHD 64.800 net</b> <b>BHD 144.800 net</b>
<b>Book for Three nights and get 25% discount</b> (Inclusive of breakfast) (Non-refundable/Non-Cancellable)	Queen Cabana (2 persons) per night. 2 Bedroom Chalet (4 persons) per night.	<b>BHD 57.200 net</b> <b>BHD 127.700 net</b>

In house guests can get a **15% discount** on all food and beverage consumption

## Food & Beverage Promotion

1<sup>st</sup> day of Eid till 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Lunch Buffet will be served at **Café Marisol Restaurant** with price of **BD5.500/net per person**. Starts from 12:30 Noon to 16:00 hrs.

**20% Happy Hours discount** at **Andalucia Café** from 16:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs.

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## LOCAL



Kuwait's KRCS volunteers delivering aid to southern Lebanon. KUNA photo

## KRCS delivers aid to southern Lebanon

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) delivered on Saturday relief aid to residents of areas in southern Lebanon who were affected by military confrontations caused by the Israeli aggressors since October 2023.

Youssef Boutros, Lebanese Red Cross (LRC) aid coordinator, told KUNA the KRCS was continuing to deliver aid

despite the ongoing military confrontations in the south, revealed that aid consisted of foodstuff and necessities for around 2,500 families.

Boutros added that residents of southern areas depended on farming for their livelihood, indicating that the Israeli military aggression had heavily damaged farmlands. (KUNA)

## Wisest of

Continued from Page 1

brought the enemies close to avoid their enmity. But the enemies did not turn into friends, and the friends turned into enemies."

Harun said, "Give me more of your knowledge" and Bahloul replied, "The first ruler of the Abbasid Dynasty was Abu Al-Abbas Abdullah bin Muhammad, who was of Persian origin. He worked to stabilize the rule of his state, and was called the butcher because he killed everyone who had any connection to the Umayyads. On the other hand, the last of the Umayyad caliphs, Marwan bin Muhammad, nicknamed "The Donkey", was unable to rule his opponents from the Umayyads, even though he was brave. That is why there were many revolts against him, but the greatest threat came to him from where he did not expect. It was from the province of Khorasan because it wanted to separate from the Umayyads, and Abu Abbas saw their weakness and disunity. Therefore, many incidents occurred between the two sides until Marwan marched to them with a large army, and the two sides met in the Battle of the Zab in the year 750 AD. Marwan was defeated and returned to the Levant. The Abbasids followed him, and he fled to Egypt. They pursued him and killed him in the village of Busir, in the last month of the same year. With his death, the Umayyad caliphate fell, because the caliph did not work to gather his family and stabilize his state.

Instead of spending on his people, he worked to please the Umayyads with money, but he did not satisfy their hunger, while the state was suffering from unrest. Each of its governors was working to turn his supporters against the other."

We benefit from the fact that choosing assistants has many advantages, and in this regard there is a lesson that must be taken into account, my lord."

As Harun was listening carefully, Bahloul said, "One day, one of the lions in the forest grew old and was no longer able to hunt. His prestige was long gone, and a jackal served as his advisor.

The jackal said to the lion, "I heard that eating the heart and ears of a donkey restores strength to lions, so I will go and get one of them for you to eat and regain your strength."

Jackals are known to be elusive and treacherous, so a short time later he brought a donkey. As soon as the hungry lion saw it, it roared terrifyingly, and so he had no choice but to run away.

The jackal said, "May Allah forgive you, my lord. Why did you do that? I will bring another one for you, but you must deal with him calmly."

The jackal returned to the donkey again and said to him, "Why did you run away from the presence of my lord the lion, who wants to make you his advisor. His roar was to welcome you. Come back to him."

When the donkey returned, the plan was for the lion to leave them alone for a while so that the donkey could feel more reassured.

That is why when he went, the jackal attacked the donkey and ate its ears and heart. When the lion became accustomed to it and saw what the deceitful animal had done, he left the forest, so that it would not be said that the jackal deceived its king.

There are many lessons in life, whether they are on the lips of people, sane or crazy, or animals. There are rulers and officials who took them into account and worked on what was best for their state.

That is why Harun Rashid took the lessons that Bahloul gave in order to preserve his state. He said to Bahloul, "You must not stray from my council, O Bahloul. You are the wisest of the wise, and you are not crazy."

Bahloul said, "Sir, before I go, I must conclude by saying that rule is reverence and law; declare it and impose so that your opponents will get lost and know that Allah is true."

## Deputy PM

Continued from Page 1

He also visited the Al-Khiron Coastal Center, Umm Al-Maradim Island Center, and Qaruh Island Center, accompanied by several security leaders, to monitor the progress of security procedures during the blessed Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

The Minister congratulated the police officers on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, pledged to persevere the country, its security, stability, and territorial integrity under the leadership of His Highness Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He commenced his tour with a significant visit to the Operations Room (112), visited Al-Khiron Coastal Center, Umm Al-Maradim Island Centre, and Qaruh Island Centre and was briefed on the workflow and procedures followed therein.

## Al-Saadoun backs

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, former Assembly Speaker and MP-elect Ahmed Al-Saadoun has clarified that Article 106 does not specify if the postponement of legislative sessions is applicable to the opening session or not; hence, the abovementioned Amiri decree is in line with the Constitution.

In a relevant development, majority of the newly elected MPs have confirmed their attendance to the inaugural session on April 17.

## KRCS, DNF

Continued from Page 1

injuries, malnutrition, weakened immunity, and the influx of new patients needing immediate medical intervention.

The British training team brings extensive experience in field medical humanitarian work in disaster-stricken areas, with the mission to share expertise and experiences worldwide, including documentation of surgical procedures and optimal techniques for treating war injuries, he pointed out.

Dr. Nott advised participating doctors that their field experience would be crucial at this stage in their lives, urging them to strive for excellence for themselves, their team, and those they care for in that setting.

Meanwhile, Charge D'Affaires Sunny Ahmad commended the ongoing partnership between the UK and Kuwait in delivering medical aid to devastated areas, especially noting Kuwait's devotion to global humanitarian efforts by sending over 45 aid-laden aircraft to Gaza, which has faced a humanitarian crisis due to Israeli attacks since last October seventh.

The David Nott Foundation, a British charity established in 2015, focuses on training doctors and medical teams to operate in areas facing shortages of medical supplies and equipment in regions affected by humanitarian conflicts or natural disasters.

## Kuwaiti charity

Continued from Page 1

they get prepared to recognize Palestine's state.

Speaking in a joint news conference following a meeting on the situation in Gaza and the Middle East region, Norway's Premier Jonas Gahr Store and his Spanish counterpart Pedro Sanchez stressed that they would back the recognition of Palestine's state as a UN full membership.

Store underlined the necessity of an immediate ceasefire, releasing hostages and facilitating Spanish aid, referring that both Spain and Norway are coordinating together in this regard.

Meanwhile, Sanchez said that the situation in Gaza is catastrophic and that it is not allowed to kill further innocent civilians.

He also warned against the spread of conflict to other parts in the Middle East region, affirming the need of an immediate ceasefire and allowing humanitarian institutions to work without any threats.

The two-state solution is the only way for security, safety and justice in the region, he said, affirming that it's time to recognize Palestine's state.

Sanchez renewed his call for holding an international peace conference as soon as possible to achieve peace in the region.

Spain will never spare efforts for peace and security in the Middle East region, he noted.

The Spanish premier is making a European trip, which started in Poland, to mobilize support to recognize Palestine's state.

In Riyadh, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan has discussed with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken the latest developments in the Gaza Strip.

This came in a phone call, initiated by Blinken Thursday, said the Saudi Foreign Ministry in a statement.

It added that the minister and the secretary reviewed efforts for de-escalation in the region and increasing the delivery of humanitarian aid into the Gaza Strip.

They also touched upon regional developments and several issues of common concern including the conflict in Sudan.

Egyptian President Abdelattah El-Sisi called on the international community to assume its responsibility for de-escalation in the besieged Gaza Strip and protecting its people from the 7-month humanitarian crisis.

In a telephone call initiated by Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Thursday, El-Sisi warned against the perils of continued escalation and expanding the scope of the conflict, which poses threats to the region's security and stability.

Nehammer congratulated Al-Sisi on Eid al-Fitr, according to a statement by Egyptian presidential spokesman Ahmad Fahmy.

Dozens of Israeli settlers stormed into a Palestinian village in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Friday, shooting and setting houses and cars on fire. The rampage killed a Palestinian man and wounded 25 others, Palestinian health officials said.

## Municipality okays new parking space for Jahra Equestrian Club

MoSA extends debt payment campaign

By Inass Awadh

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Kuwait Municipality approved the request of the Public Authority for Sports (PAS) to allocate surface for parking in front of the Jahra Equestrian Club with dimensions of approximately 450mx17.50m and an area of 7,875 square meters, according to the coordinates shown in the sketch attached to the transaction, and linking them to the existing parking lots within the boundaries of the equestrian club.**

The technical opinion for the transaction approved by the Director General of the Municipality Saud Al-Dabbous stipulated adherence to the requirements contained in the responses of the members of the Public Services Facilities Subcommittee at its meeting held on March 14, 2024, and coordination with them before implementation.

The most prominent among them is the confirmation of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources to maintain distance from the agricultural and irrigation project on both sides of the road, which is 100 meters away from the right of way and 120 meters wide, as well as the necessity of keeping distance from the project boundaries by 10 meters on both sides, making minutes of a meeting before starting the work, and coordinating with the engineer responsible for the site.

In addition to this is the requirement of the General Traffic Department of the Ministry of Interior to provide it with detailed plans showing the entrances and exits to and from the project for study.

The administration is also authorized to modify the dimensions and area of the parking lots to no more than the designated spaces, in the event that it conflicts with any existing infrastructure services or any regulatory reasons during installation.

**Dept payment extended:** Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs Abdulziz Sari Al-Mutairi has announced the extension of the debt payment campaign, "Your help is their joy 2", until April 20, reports Al-Anba daily.

Al-Mutairi said this is in compliance with the directive of Minister of Social, Family and Childhood Affairs Sheikh Firas Al-Saud to give a chance to the largest number of donors to participate and for a larger number of debtors to benefit from the donations.

He added the response public and private institutions, associations and individuals reflects the honorable image that the Kuwaiti people have created in terms of goodness and generosity by extending a helping hand to those in need, and putting a smile on the faces of Kuwaiti families who need help, particularly during the holy month of Ramadan.

**Minister visits schools:** Minister of Education, Higher Education and Scientific Research Dr Adel Al-Adwani visited a number of schools recently as part of his inspection tours to review the progress of the educational process, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The minister's visit to schools is within the framework of providing moral support to students and school administrations.

Al-Adwani expressed his gratitude, appreciation and pride for students who are committed to attending school, as well as the school administrations keen on providing a school environment that motivates students to benefit from the lessons provided to them.

He pointed out that commitment to school, care and follow-up is one of the characteristics of the successful and outstanding student that the ministry seeks to achieve; while strengthening him with the weapons of science and knowledge to reach the highest academic ranks.



Dr Adel Al-Adwani



A file photo of the celebration of the festival.

## Celebration of Bengali New Year

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** Pahela Baishakh or Bangla Noboborsho is the first day of Bengali Calendar. It is celebrated on 14 April as a national holiday in Bangladesh. In Bengali, the word Pohela means 'first' and Boishakh is the first month of the Bengali Year. Bengali New Year is referred to in Bengali as Noboborsho where 'Nobo' means new and 'Borsho' means year.

## Traditional roots

During the Mughal rule, land taxes were collected from Bengali people according to the Islamic Hijri calendar. This calendar was a lunar calendar, and its new year did not coincide with the solar agricultural cycles. According to some sources, the festival was a tradition introduced in Bengal during the rule of Mughal Emperor Akbar to time the tax year to the harvest and the Bangla year was there called "Bangabda". Akbar asked the royal astronomer Fathullah Shirazi to create a new calendar by combining the lunar Islamic calendar and solar Hindu calendar already in use, and this was known as "Fosholi Shon (harvest calendar)". According to some historians, this started the Bengali calendar.

According to the Bangladeshi academic and folklorist, the origin of the Bengali calendar is unclear. According to one, it is called Bangla shon or shaal, which are Arabic and Persian words respectively, suggests that it was introduced by a Muslim King or Sultan. In contrast, according to other, its traditional name is "Bangabda". It is also unclear, whether it was adopted by Alauddin Husain Shah or Akbar. The tradition to use the Bengali calendar may have been started by Husain Shah before Akbar. However, regardless of who adopted the Bengali calendar and the New Year, it helped collect land taxes after the spring harvest based on traditional Bengali calendar, because the Islamic Hijri calendar created administrative difficulties in setting the collection date.

There is another theory about the origin of the Bengali Calendar. Some historians attribute the Bengali calendar to the 7th-century King Shashanka. Because the term "Bangabda (Bangla year)" is also found in two Shiva temples of India many centuries older than Akbar era. These inscriptions suggest that the Bengali calendar existed before Akbar's time.

## Celebration of Bengali New Year

The Bengali New Year is observed as a public holiday in Bangladesh. It is celebrated across religious boundaries by its Muslim majority and Hindu minority. The festival became a popular means of expressing cultural pride and heritage among the Bangladeshis.

The day is marked with singing, processions, and fairs. Traditionally, businesses start this day with a new ledger, clearing out the old. Singers perform traditional songs welcoming the New Year. People enjoy classical Jatra plays. People wear festive dress with women decorating their hair with flowers.

White-red color combinations are particularly popular. People of Bangladesh prepare and enjoy a variety of traditional festive foods



Flowers being released in the water.

on PohelaBoishakh. These include Panta Bhat (watered rice), Ilish Baji (fried Hilsa Fish) and many special Bhattas (pastes).

The celebrations start at dawn with a rendition of Rabindranath Tagore's song "Esho he Boishakh" by Chhayanaut under the banyan tree at Ramna at Dhaka.

An integral part of the festivities is the "Mangal Shobhajatra", a traditional colourful procession organised by the students of the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Dhaka. "Mangal Shobhajatra" is a mass procession that takes place at dawn on the first day of the Bengali New Year in Bangladesh.

The Bengali phrase "Mangal Shobhajatra" literally means "procession for well-being". Every year, thousands of people take part in the procession that features gigantic replicas of birds, fish, animals, folk tale and other motifs. The rally symbolizes unity, peace, and the driving away of evil to allow progress of country and humanity. It is considered as an expression of the secular identity of the Bengali people, uniting the country irrespective of class, age, religious faith, or gender.

Different cultural organizations and bands also perform on this occasion and fairs celebrating Bengali culture are organized throughout the country. Other traditional events held to celebrate Pohela Boishakh include bull racing, wrestling, boat racing, cockfights, etc.

## UNESCO Recognition of "Mangal Shobhajatra"

In 2014 the Bangla Academy compiled a nomination file that was approved by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh and submitted to UNESCO. On 30 November 2016 the "Mangal Shobhajatra" festival was selected as an intangible cultural heritage by the Inter-governmental Committee on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO. On 11th session, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

## Boisabi Festival

Boisabi Festival is the celebration of the Bengali New Year by the indigenous communities living in Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh.

Some of the ethnic communities living in various parts of Bangladesh also celebrate the New Year but they each have a different name for it. The festivities get their respective unique approach. On this occasion the three hilly districts -- Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari -- wear a festive look. The people of the hills consider the first day

of the year auspicious.

Three ethnic communities come together to celebrate Pahela Baishakh. 'Boishuk' of the Tripura, 'Sangrai' of the Marma and 'Biju' of the Chakma are often celebrated together as 'Boi-Sa-Bi'.

These differ from traditional Pahela Baishakh celebrations. Festivities in the hills begin on the last day of the month of Chaitra (last month of Bengali Year) and continue for three or more days. Religious rituals are often part of these festivals. The festivals are celebrated in many ways. Children and youth people enjoy the day by wearing new dress, visiting friends and relatives house and take Panchan, a special vegetable dish prepared for the occasion.

In the Marma community, they also celebrate by playing some games called Pani Khela (Sangrai), Alari khela and Dha-thu. Goraia dance is very popular in the Tripura community. As a celebration of the festivals 10 to 100 artist perform the dance. The main theme of this dance is to show their daily lives and the steps of Jum cultivation.

The first day of the festival is called 'Phulbijhu' the second day is 'Mulbijhu' and third day or first day of the Bangla New Year is called 'Goyiya Poyiya Din'.

On the day of Phulbijhu, boys and girls wake up early in the morning and clean up houses and its surroundings and they decorate houses with different flowers. They also float flowers in rivers, canals and springs seeking blessing to God for eternal peace and prosperity.

Though the festival is related to the ethnic people but anyone can enjoy it with much enthusiasm. Tourists have flocked to the region to enjoy the traditional festival of the tribal people.

Secularism is one of the four fundamental principles according to the Constitution of Bangladesh. Over 90.4% of Bangladeshis are Muslims, the rest being Hindus 8.5%, Buddhists 0.6%, Christians 0.4%, and others 0.2%. People in Bangladesh observe various secular festivals at different times throughout the year with social and religion harmony and tranquillity.

On this first day of Bengali New Year, on behalf of Bangladesh community in Kuwait and on our own behalf we extend our heartfelt greetings of "Bengali New Year" to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, brotherly people of Kuwait, our colleagues, friends and their families. "SHUVO NOBOBORSHO".

## World News Roundup

## Europe

**10 died from shelling in Zaporizhzhia region:** At least 10 people, including children, died after shelling late on Friday struck a Russian-occupied town in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, a local Kremlin-installed official said, blaming Ukraine for the attack.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials reported at least three civilian deaths elsewhere in the country that they said resulted from Russian attacks.



Balitsky

Russian emergency services on Saturday were working in the rubble in hopes of saving civilians trapped underneath the debris of their homes in Tokmak, in a part of southern Ukraine that Moscow has illegally annexed from Kyiv, according to the Kremlin-installed regional head Yevhen Balitsky.

The Tokmak municipal administration reported on Telegram that the shelling struck three apartment blocks on Friday evening. Five people were pulled alive from the rubble, Balitsky said, and a total of 13 people were hospitalized.

As of early afternoon on Saturday, Ukraine had not commented on the allegations. (AP)

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**Russia announces mass evacuation for Orenburg:** Authorities in the Russian city of Orenburg, near the border with Kazakhstan, on Friday announced a mass evacuation from there after water levels in the Ural River rose further, threatening the area with more flooding.

The Orenburg mayor, Sergei Salmin, called on the residents in a statement on the messaging app Telegram in the morning to "urgently evacuate" as sirens rang out in the city.

"This is not a drill," Salmin wrote. "The flood situation in Orenburg is extremely dangerous. Over the past 10 hours, the water level in the Ural (River) has risen by 40 centimeters and is now at 11.43 (meters). These values are dangerous."

Images from the city showed entire districts submerged in water. (AP)

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**Draft docu could serve as starting point for talks:** A draft peace agreement that Russia and Ukraine negotiated in the early days of the conflict could serve as a starting point for talks to end the fighting, the Kremlin said Friday, reviving a proposal that Ukraine had rejected.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that the draft document that was discussed in Istanbul in March 2022 could be "the basis for starting negotiations." At the same time, he noted that the possible future talks would need to take into account the "new realities."

In September 2022, Russia annexed four Ukrainian regions in a move that Kyiv and its Western allies have rejected as an unlawful. (AP)

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**Ukraine parliament passes controversial law:** Ukraine's parliament passed a controversial law on how the country will call up new soldiers at a time when it needs to replenish depleted forces that are increasingly struggling to fend off Russia's advance.

The law was passed against a backdrop of an escalating Russian campaign that has devastated Ukraine's energy infrastructure in recent weeks. Authorities said overnight missile and drone attacks completely destroyed the Trypilka thermal power plant, the largest power-generating facility in the region of the country's capital.

Two years after Russia's full-scale invasion captured nearly a quarter of Ukraine, the stakes could not be higher for Kyiv. After a string of victories in the first year of the war, fortunes have turned for the Ukrainian military, which is dug in, outgunned and outnumbered. (AP)

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**Massive attack destroys Ukraine power plants:** A massive missile and drone attack destroyed one of Ukraine's largest power plants and damaged others, officials said Thursday, part of a renewed Russian campaign targeting energy infrastructure.

The Trypilka plant, which was the biggest energy supplier for the Kyiv, Cherkasy and Zhytomyr regions, was struck numerous times, destroying the transformer, turbines and generators and leaving the plant ablaze. As the first drone approached, workers hid in a shelter, saving their lives, said Andrii Gota, chairman of the supervisory board of the state company that runs the plant, Centrenergy.

They watched the plant burn, surrounded by dense smoke and engulfed in flames. "It's terrifying," said Gota. Hours later, rescuers were still dismantling the rubble. (AP)

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**Harris installed as Ireland's new PM:** Lawmaker Simon Harris was elected Ireland's prime minister by a vote in parliament, becoming at 37 the country's youngest-ever leader.

Harris takes over as head of Ireland's three-party coalition government from Leo Varadkar, who announced his surprise resignation last month. Harris, who served as higher education minister in Varadkar's government, was the only candidate to replace him as head of the center-right Fine Gael party.

Lawmakers in the Dáil, the lower house of Ireland's parliament, confirmed Harris as taoiseach, or prime minister, by a 88-69 vote. (AP)

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**Norway's health minister resigns:** Norway's health minister resigned Friday, the second Norwegian government member to step down this year amid allegations they plagiarized academic works.

Ingvild Kjerkol resigned a day after a probe by Nord University in Bodoe in northern Norway, where Kjerkol, handed in her master thesis in 2021, concluded that "there is a not insignificant amount of plagiarism in her master's thesis."

"We have come to the conclusion that Ingvild should resign as minister," Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store told a press conference. He said the probe had concluded the plagiarism was "intentional."

Kjerkol said she and a co-author "did not intend to plagiarize other people's assignments." (AP)

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**Belgium launches probe:** Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo announced on Friday an investigation into suspected Russian interference in June's Europe-wide elections, saying that his country's intelligence service has confirmed the existence of a network trying to undermine support for Ukraine.

"Belgian intelligence services have confirmed the existence of pro-Russian interference networks with activities in several European countries and also here in Belgium," said De Croo, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union. (AP)

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**Belarus convicts dissident rock band:** Belarusian authorities on Friday convicted a famous dissident rock band, designating the band and its three members as extremist and sentencing them to two years of correctional labor. It was the latest in a yearslong crackdown on dissent that has engulfed this country of 9.5 million people.

Nizkiz band members - Alyaksandr Ilyin, Siarhei Kulsha and Dzmitry Khalyaukin - were charged with "organizing and plotting actions grossly violating public order."

In 2020, when Belarus was rocked by mass protests that erupted after President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term in office in a disputed election, the band released "Rules," a song that became the protests' anthem. (AP)



Tulips are seen at the Volcji Potok Arboretum near Kamnik, Slovenia, April 12. The traditional exhibition of spring flowers and tulips at the Volcji Potok Arboretum of Slovenia was marked by the bustle of people and the colorful palette of flowers. (AP)

## Politics

## House passes reauthorization of surveillance program

## Biden and Trump did more harm than good

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP) — There's a reason why US President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump are spending so much time attacking each other - people don't think either man has much to brag about when it comes to his own record. Americans generally think that while they were in the White House, both did more harm than good on key issues.

But the two candidates have different weak spots. For Biden, it's widespread unhappiness on two issues: the economy and immigration. Trump, meanwhile, faces an electorate where substantial shares think he harmed the country on a range of issues.

A new poll from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that more than half of US adults think Biden's presidency has hurt the country on cost of living and immigration, while nearly half think Trump's presidency hurt the country on voting rights and election security, relations with foreign countries, abortion laws and climate change.

"Considering the price of gas, the price of groceries, the economy - I did very well during those four years," Christina Elliott, 60, a Republican from Texas, said of the Trump presidency. "I didn't have to worry about filling up my tank or losing half of my paycheck to the grocery store."

## Learn

Elliott wasn't too keen on Trump's handling of abortion and said that when it comes to the former president's rhetoric, "He just needs to learn how to be tactful and shut his mouth."

"But other than that, like I said, I did very well during the Trump years," she added.

The polling underscores why certain issues - such as abortion for Biden and immigration for Trump - have been persistent focal points for each of the campaigns. The former president regularly decries the number of asylum-seekers who have arrived in the US under Biden, describing the situation in apocalyptic and dark terms. And Biden has gone on the offensive against Trump on abortion, especially after this week's ruling from the Arizona Supreme Court that essentially

criminalized the procedure in the state.

When asked which president did more to help people like them, roughly one-third say Donald Trump and about one-quarter say Joe Biden. Yet 30% of adults said neither Biden nor Trump benefitted them. It's another data point reflecting an electorate that has been largely disappointed with this year's general election choices, generating little enthusiasm among key parts of the Biden and Trump political coalitions.

Americans rate Biden particularly negatively on a few specific issues. Only about 2 in 10 Americans think Biden's presidency helped "a lot" or "a little" on cost of living, and 16% say that about immigration and border security. Nearly 6 in 10 say his presidency hurt a lot or a little on these issues. Nearly half, 46%, of Americans, by contrast, say that Trump's presidency helped a lot or a little on immigration or border security. Four in 10 say it helped on cost of living.

## Hurt

Texas resident Trelicia Mornes, 36, said she feels the Biden presidency has hurt a lot when it comes to everyday expenses.

"Now that he's in the office, the cost of living has spiked out of control, and there's nothing being done about it," Mornes, a Democrat, said, pointing to rising costs of rent and food. She said she believes Biden can do more. "He just chooses to do other things."

The pandemic hurt Trump in terms of employment as the economy lost 2.7 million jobs under his watch. But the pandemic lockdowns also dramatically curbed inflation as the consumer price index dipped from an annual rate of 2.3% to as low as 0.1%. At the same time, low interest rates and historic levels of deficit-funded government stimulus left many households feeling better off under Trump.

Coming out of the pandemic, Biden gave the economy a boost with additional aid that helped spur job gains of 15.2 million under his watch. But supply chain issues, Russia's war in Ukraine and Biden's aid package are judged by many economists as having contributed to rising inflation, hurting the Democrat's approval ratings.

Trump's advantage on the cost of living and immigration is driven partially by Democrats' lack of enthusiasm about Biden's performance. About one-third of Democrats, for example, think Biden's presidency hurt on cost of living, and another third think Biden neither helped nor hurt. Just one-third of Democrats think Biden's presidency helped on cost of living. About 3 in 10 Democrats think Biden's presidency helped on immigration and border security, a similar share think his presidency hurt, and about 4 in 10 think it made no difference.

Nadia Stepicheva, 38, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, is unhappy with how Biden has handled immigration.

Trump has a different problem.

The former president doesn't have any asked-about issues where more than half of Americans think he did more to hurt things than to help, but the overall sense of harm is somewhat broader. Nearly half of Americans think his presidency did more to hurt than help on climate change, voting rights and election security, abortion laws and relations with foreign countries.

Catherine Scott, a Republican who recently moved to New York from Florida, said she found Trump's approach to foreign policy particularly concerning.

## Also:

**WASHINGTON:** The House voted Friday to reauthorize and reform a key US government surveillance tool following a dramatic showdown on the floor over whether the FBI should be restricted from using the program to search for Americans' data.

The bill was approved on a bipartisan basis, 273-147, though it will still have to clear the Senate to become law. The surveillance program is set to expire on April 19 unless Congress acts.

Passage of the bill represented a much-needed victory for Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., who has been wrangling with conservative critics of the legislation for months. A group of 19 Republicans revolted to block the bill from coming to the floor earlier in the week, forcing Johnson to make late changes to secure their support.

In a statement, Caban said the officers, Brendan Thompson and Herbert Davis, "acted within the law" in the lead-up to the 32-year-old's death. He accused the city's police oversight board of waiting too long to bring administrative charges against the

officers, adding that they were not guilty of any criminal conduct.

The 2019 killing of Trawick, a Black man, by a white police officer touched off widespread outrage in New York, followed by years of frustration over what

some viewed as efforts by the police department to stall the investigation into his death.

Ellen and Rickie Trawick, the victim's parents, described the commissioner's ultimate determination as disgraceful. "The utter disregard they have for our son's memory, to make this decision on the five-year anniversary of his death is disgusting and shameful," they added. (AP)

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**Man gets 40 yrs to life:** A California man was sentenced Friday to 40 years to life for the fatal shooting of a 6-year-old boy who was riding in the back of his mother's car on the freeway, prosecutors said.

Marcus Eriz, now 27, was sentenced in Orange County Superior Court in Santa Ana for killing Aiden Leos in May 2021 while the boy was on his way to kindergarten, the district attorney's office said in a statement.

Eriz was convicted by a jury in January of second-degree murder and shooting at an occupied motor vehicle.

"What he took was the life of a little six-year-old boy and the sense of security of drivers everywhere who worry that driving on our freeways could be a death sentence, not because of a crash but because of a bullet," Orange County District Attorney Todd Spitzer said in the statement. (AP)



US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill on April 10. The House voted on April 12 to reauthorize and reform a key US government surveillance tool following a dramatic showdown on the floor over whether the FBI should be restricted from using the program to search for Americans' data. (AP)



Caban



Biden

## America

## 1 dead, 13 hurt in semitrailer crash:

A Texas semitrailer driver rammed a stolen 18-wheeler through the front of a public safety building where his renewal for a commercial driver's license had been rejected, killing one person and injuring 13 others, authorities said Friday.

The intentional crash into the single-story brick building off a highway in Brenham, a rural town outside of Houston, littered debris in the parking lot and left a gaping hole in the entrance. The crash damaged the front of the red semitrailer, which was hauling materials on a flatbed.

After crashing into the building the first time, the driver backed up the truck with the intention of smashing it again before being detained, Brenham Mayor Atwood Kenjura said.

"It's unfortunate that we are here gathered for a really senseless tragedy," Kenjura said. (AP)

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## Judge refuses to dismiss Biden case:

A federal judge in Delaware refused to throw out a federal gun case against Hunter Biden, rejecting the president's son's claim that he is being prosecuted for political purposes as well as other arguments.

US District Judge Maryellen Noreika's ruling increases the prospect that Biden could face trial in the case as early as June, in the midst of his father's reelection campaign. His efforts to scuttle the other criminal case he faces in California involving tax allegations have also failed.

Noreika denied several defense requests to dismiss the case charging Biden with lying about his drug use in October 2018 on a form to buy a gun that he kept for about 11 days.

His lawyers had argued the case was politically motivated and asserted that an immunity provision from an original plea deal that fell apart still holds. They had also challenged the appointment of Delaware US Attorney David Weiss as special counsel to lead the prosecution. (AP)

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**'Officers won't be disciplined':** Two New York City police officers involved in the fatal shooting of Kawaski Trawick inside his Bronx apartment five years ago will not face internal discipline, the city's police commissioner, Edward Caban, announced Friday.



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, emergency workers extinguish a fire after a Russian attack on the Trypilka thermal power plant in Ukraine, Kyiv region, Ukraine, on April 11. A massive missile and drone attack destroyed one of Ukraine's largest power plants and damaged others, officials said on Thursday part of a renewed Russian campaign targeting energy infrastructure. (AP)

Africa

Kenya flooding kills 13

Military trainers from Russia arrive in Niger

DAKAR, Senegal, April 13, (Agencies): Russian military trainers arrived this week in Niger to reinforce the country's air defenses as the west African nation pulls away from close cooperation with the United States in counterterrorism efforts, turning instead to Russia for security.

State television in Niger on Thursday broadcast footage of Russian military trainers arriving in the country aboard a plane equipped with military supplies. Two Russian trainers were filmed in front of the plane at night wearing military uniforms, caps and face coverings.

"We are here to train the Nigerian army to use the military equipment that is here," one of the Russian trainers said in the broadcast, speaking in French. "We are here to develop military co-operation between Russia and Niger."

Niger's ruling military council, known as the CNSP, has yet to order American troops out, U.S. officials have said. But the arrival of Russian forces makes it complicated for the US forces, along with diplomatic and civilian personnel, to remain in the country. It also throws into doubt the future of joint Niger-U.S. counterinsurgency operations.

Until recently, Washington considered Niger a key partner and ally in a region swept by coups in recent years, investing millions of dollars in an airbase in a desert area that served as the heart of American counterinsurgency operations in Africa's sub-Saharan region known as the Sahel.

The US also invested heavily in training Niger's forces to beat back insurgencies by militants linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, which ravaged the country and its neighbors. But last summer, some of those elite US-trained forces took part in a coup that ousted the elected president. Since then, relations between Niger's new leaders and Washington have deteriorated.

Following the visit last month of a US delegation led by the top US envoy to Africa, Molly Phee, the junta announced on state television that flights from the U.S.-built airbase were illegal and that it no longer recognized the American military presence in the country.

**Kenya flooding kills 13:** Heavy rains pounding different parts of Kenya have led to the deaths of at least 13 people and displaced some 15,000, the United Nations said, as forecasters warned more rains can be expected until June.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, citing the Kenya Red Cross Society, said Thursday that nearly 20,000 people have been affected. That includes the estimated 15,000 displaced by heavy rains and flash floods across the country since the start of the wet season in mid-March.

The East African country has seen thousands of people killed by flooding in previous rainy seasons, mostly in the lake regions and downstream of major rivers.

The Kenya Red Cross Society told The Associated Press that five major roads were cut off by the floods, including Garissa Road in northern Kenya, where a bus carrying 51 passengers was swept away on Tuesday. All passengers were rescued.

**3 killed in Ethiopia shootout:** A shootout between militiamen and police officers killed three people Friday in the Ethiopian capital in a rare case of the country's many regional rebellions spilling into the city.

The violence occurred near Millennium Hall in Addis Ababa's downtown as officers tried to apprehend three fighters from a militia known as Fano. The fighters were "on a mission to carry out a terrorist attack," a police statement said.

Two of the militia members were killed, and police arrested the third. A bystander also was killed during the gunbattle, and two police officers were injured.

"The extremists were asked to surrender but refused to do so," the police statement said.

**Mali junta bans media from reporting:** In a deepening crackdown, Mali's ruling junta banned the media from reporting on activities of political parties and associations, a day after suspending all political activities in the country until further notice.

The order, issued by Mali's high authority for communication, was distributed on social media. The notice said it applied to all forms of the media, including television, radio, online and print newspapers.

Mali has experienced two coups since 2020, leading a wave of political instability that has swept across West and Central Africa in recent years. Along with its political troubles, the country is also in the grip of a worsening insurgency by militants linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group.

**Somali Army kills 27 militants:** The Somali National Army (SNA) announced killing 27 members of the Al-Shabaab militants in a military operation in the Lower Jubba region.

The operation, which took place in Bar Sangouni, an area within the Jamame district, marks a significant blow to the terror group's activities in the region, the Somali News Agency (SONNA) reported.

According to official reports, the army also captured five militants during the operation. This strategic victory came as a response to an attempted attack by the militants on a Somali National Army site.

The SNA troops, armed with critical intelligence, were able to thwart the attack and inflict a major defeat on the militants, added the agency.

**EU to host Humanitarian Confab:** France, Germany and the EU will co-chair an International Humanitarian Conference for Sudan and the neighboring countries in Paris on April 15th.

A statement by the High Representative of European Union (EU) Josep Borrell said, "the EU is appalled by the unprecedented man-made calamity created by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and their respective affiliated militias since 15 April 2023."

"One year into the conflict, the EU recalls its strong appeal on the warring parties for an immediate and durable ceasefire, as well as for the establishment of monitoring mechanism," the statement said.

"The magnitude of the conflict shows that silencing the guns is vital to put a halt to the destruction inflicted on the Sudanese people and the country," the statement added.



Emergency services are seen at Bondi Junction after multiple people were stabbed inside the Westfield Bondi Junction shopping centre in Sydney, Australia on April 13. Inset: People are led out from the Westfield Shopping Centre. (AP)

6 dead, attacker fatally shot by police in Sydney mall stabbings

A man stabbed six people to death at a busy Sydney shopping center Saturday before he was fatally shot, police said. Multiple people, including a small child, were also injured in the attack.

The suspect stabbed nine people at the Westfield Shopping Centre in Bondi Junction, which is in the city's

eastern suburbs, before a police inspector shot him after he turned and raised a knife, New South Wales Assistant Police Commissioner Anthony Cooke told reporters. Six of the victims and the suspect died. Police had no specific details on the condition of the injured.

Cooke said he believed that the

suspect acted alone, and he was "content that there is no continuing threat." He said officials didn't know who the offender was. "This is quite raw," he said, and a "lengthy and precise" investigation was just beginning.

He said there was "nothing that we are aware of at the scene that would indicate any motive or any ideology."

When asked whether officials were ruling out terrorism, he said: "We're not ruling anything out."

Cooke said the police inspector, a senior officer, was alone when she confronted the suspect and engaged him soon after her arrival on the scene, "saving a range of people's lives." (AP)

Asia

Chinese official talks with North Korean counterpart

'US support for Manila, Tokyo defense ironclad'

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): US President Joe Biden said that US defense commitment to Pacific allies was "ironclad" as he gathered Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the White House in the midst of growing concern about provocative Chinese military action in the Indo-Pacific.

The US and the Philippines have had a mutual treaty in place for more than 70 years. Biden's forceful reinforcement of the American commitment comes in the midst of persistent skirmishes between the Philippine and Chinese coast guards in the disputed South China Sea.

Commitment

"The United States defense commitments to Japan and to the Philippines are ironclad. They're ironclad," Biden said as he began three-way talks at the White House with Kishida and Marcos. "As I said before, any attack on Philippine aircraft, vessels or armed forces in the South China Sea would invoke our mutual defense treaty."

Relations between China and the Philippines have been repeatedly tested by confrontations involving the two nations' coast guard vessels in the disputed South China Sea. Chinese coast guard ships also regularly approach disputed Japanese-controlled East China Sea islands near Taiwan.

The so-called "gray-zone" harassment by China has included shining military-grade lasers at the Philippine Coast Guard, firing water cannons at vessels and ramming into Philippine ships near the Second Thomas Shoal, which both Manila and Beijing claim. In 1999, Manila intentionally ran a World War II-era ship aground on the shoal, establishing a permanent military presence there.

Biden, in a wide-ranging phone call with Chinese President Xi Jinping last week, raised concerns about China's

operations in the South China Sea, including efforts to impede the Philippines from resupplying its forces on the Second Thomas Shoal.

Chinese officials have bristled at criticism over their action in the South China Sea and blamed the U.S. for exacerbating tensions.

"No one should violate China's territorial sovereignty and maritime rights and interests, and China remains steadfast in safeguarding our lawful rights," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said Thursday.

The White House billed the first-ever trilateral summit with Japan and the Philippines as a potent response to China's attempts at "intimidation" and said it would send a message that China is "the outlier in the neighborhood," according to an administration official. The White House said in a statement that Biden and Marcos during the talks "underscored their commitment to international law in the South China Sea" and reaffirmed their countries' treaty obligations to defend each other.

The Biden administration on Friday reassured the Philippines anew that the US commitment to the country's defense is steadfast amid increasing concerns about provocative Chinese actions in disputed areas of the South China Sea.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and national security adviser Jake Sullivan hosted their Philippine counterparts at the State Department.

Also:

**ABOARD THE USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT:** A US carrier strike group led by the USS Theodore Roosevelt has held a two-day joint exercise with its allies Japan and South Korea.

A number of US and South Korean guided missile destroyers and a Japanese warship joined the drills in the disputed East China Sea, where worries

about China's territorial claims are rising. The Associated Press was one of several news organizations allowed a front-row look at the drills.

Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, commander of Carrier Strike Group Nine, said the three nations conducted undersea warfare exercises, maritime interdiction operations, search and rescue drills and work focused on communication and data sharing.

He told journalists Thursday on the Roosevelt that these drills would help improve communication among the United States and its allies and "better prepare us for a crisis in the region."

**SEOUL, South Korea:** A top Chinese official arrived in North Korea and held talks on how to boost their cooperation. North Korea's state media reported Friday, in the countries' highest-level meeting in about five years.

Zhao Leji, who is chairman of China's National People's Congress and considered the No. 3 official in the ruling Communist Party, arrived in North Korea on Thursday. China's government earlier said he will stay in North Korea until Saturday.

Zhao met his North Korean counterpart Choe Ryong Hae later Thursday and discussed how to promote exchanges and cooperation on all areas such as politics, economy and culture, the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported.

The two also exchanged views on unspecified regional and international issues of mutual concerns, KCNA said.

Zhao is one of the seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee, the Communist Party's top leadership body headed by Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Zhao's visit to North Korea marked the first bilateral exchange involving a Chinese Politburo Standing Committee member since the coronavirus pandemic started.



Canadian soldiers stand guard on the rooftop of their embassy in Port-au-Prince, Haiti on April 10. A transitional council tasked with choosing Haiti's next prime minister and Cabinet was established Friday in a move supporters hope will help quell turmoil in the troubled Caribbean country where most of the capital remains under the grip of criminal gangs. (AP)



Maduro



Martelly

Lat/Am

**Haiti council established:** A transitional council tasked with choosing Haiti's next prime minister and Cabinet was established Friday in a move supporters hope will help quell turmoil in the troubled Caribbean country where most of the capital remains under the grip of criminal gangs.

The formation of the council, announced in a decree published Friday in a Haitian government gazette, was expected to soon trigger the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry, but a new provision said he would step down when a new premier is chosen. Henry did not immediately comment.

Those awarded a seat on the council are Petit Desalin, a party led by former senator and presidential candidate Jean-Charles Moïse; EDE/RED, a party led by former prime minister Claude Joseph; the Montana Accord, a group of civil society leaders, political parties and others; Fami Lavalas, the party of former president Jean-Bertrand Aristide; the Jan. 30 Collective, which represents parties including that of former president Michel Martelly; and the private sector. (AP)

**'Extradite Venezuelan citizens':** Prosecutors in Chile said Friday they plan to formally request that Venezuela extradite two of its citizens to stand trial for charges related to the abduction and killing of a Venezuelan dissident in Chile earlier this year, a case that has strained relations between the South American nations.

Prosecutors ruled that the slaying of the activist and former army lieutenant was plotted in Venezuela. If proven, the grisly killing on Chilean soil could signal a new front in the widespread repression by the government of President Nicolás Maduro against the opposition ahead of his re-election contest later this year. Venezuela has denied involvement. (AP)

**'Govt must compensate victims':** The Brazilian Supreme Court ruled that the state must compensate victims of stray

bullets during military and law enforcement operations. The ruling means that the state is now civilly liable for deaths or injuries result-

ing from either police or armed forces operations, even in cases where the forensics reports are inconclusive. The country's top court was ruling in



Passengers of a bus that was swept away by floodwaters are rescued by boat, near Garissa, northern Kenya, on April 9. Police said some of the passengers managed to escape just before the bus was submerged, while others climbed onto the roof. The incident happened just hours after Kenya's roads agency announced the closure of another section of the same road that was flooded after the Tana River swelled due to continuing heavy rains. (AP)

a case stemming from the killing of a man by a stray bullet in 2015 during an army action in Rio de Janeiro's impoverished Mare neighborhood. The court ordered the federal government to pay 300,000 reais (\$60,000) to his family, who will also receive a lifetime pension and have the victim's funeral expenses covered.

"The risk of stray bullets and violent firearm deaths is recurring in the country. Efforts are being made to reverse this pattern of violence, which spares no one, including children," said Cristina Neme, a sociologist and coordinator of Instituto Sou da Paz, a nonprofit that monitors public security. (AP)

**'Suspend Ecuador':** Mexico's president said his country wants the United Nations to suspend Ecuador from the world body as part of a complaint to the top UN court over Ecuador's police raid last week on the Mexican embassy in Quito. Tensions between Mexico and Ecuador have soared since late last week when Ecuadorian authorities forced their way into the diplomatic mission to arrest Ecuador's former vice president Jorge Glas who had been holed up there seeking asylum in Mexico.

Mexico filed its complaint Thursday at the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands asking the UN to suspend Ecuador, although a UN spokesman in New York said it would be up to other member states to decide on suspending a country. (AP)

## gold prices surge amid rising geopolitical tensions

The allure of gold as a safe haven continues to grow as its value steadily rises, with expectations pointing towards a surge to \$2,500 per ounce amidst mounting geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, reports Al-Jarida daily.

Gold prices have surged by 14% this year, fueled by robust purchases from central banks and a heightened desire for safe havens in the face of persistent geopolitical risks, coupled with strong demand from funds aligned with market trends.

Hani Abu Aqla, the chief market analyst at XTB, anticipates gold prices to approach the \$2,500 mark, supported by escalating geopolitical tensions.

He notes that gold's ascent isn't solely attributed to anticipated interest rate reductions but is rather the outcome of a geopolitical premium alongside robust central bank purchases.

Notably, the Chinese Central Bank has recorded net gold purchases for 17 consecutive months, with total central bank purchases shifting from net selling to net buying, indicative of significant gold demand. Abu Aqla underscores the potent geopolitical tensions, notably stemming from the potential for Iranian involvement in ongoing regional conflicts, alongside developments such as Lufthansa's suspension of flights to Tehran.

## global economic growth projected at 3% by IMF chief

Strong economic activity in the United States and emerging markets is projected to help drive global growth by about 3% this year, the International Monetary Fund's chief said Thursday, below the annual historic average and a warning sign about potential lackluster performances through the 2020s.

"Without a course correction, we are indeed heading for 'the Tepid Twenties' -- a sluggish and disappointing decade," said Kristalina Georgieva, the organization's managing director, in announcing the economic projection and longer-term outlook.

She said global economic activity is weak by past

measurements and debt is up, posing major challenges to public finances in many parts of the world.

"The scars of the pandemic are still with us. The global output loss since 2020 is around \$3.3 trillion, with the costs disproportionately falling on the most vulnerable countries," she said.

The anticipated growth rate of just more than 3% is slightly above last year's projection. The historic average is 3.8%.

"Global growth is marginally stronger on account of robust activity in the United States and in many emerging market economies," Georgieva said. (AP)

## Market Movements

12-04-2024

	Change	Closing pts		Change	Closing pts
JAPAN	-	Nikkei 225	+80.92	39,523.55	
BRITAIN	-	FTSE 100	+71.78	7,995.58	
EUROPE	-	Euro Stoxx 50	-11.67	4,955.01	

# Business

## Diversification in finance

# 'Investing in hedge funds, strategies to navigate market volatility'

By NBK Wealth

Nobel Prize winner Harry Markowitz famously said, "Diversification is the only free lunch in finance." Diversification is indeed crucial for investors to navigate market volatility and to maximize their risk adjusted returns. Hedge funds can offer valuable diversification opportunities when implemented correctly.

The hedge fund industry has evolved from obscurity to over USD4 trillion in Assets Under Management (AUM). Originating in 1949, hedge funds were initially favored by high-net-worth individuals (HNWI). By the 1980s, they attracted a broader investor base, including pension funds and sovereign wealth funds. The 1990s witnessed accelerated growth as hedge funds attracted top talent leading to the emergence and refinement of additional trading strategies to cater to varying risk appetites and market conditions. The 2000s saw advancements in computing power, enabling sophisticated algorithmic trading programs that enhanced performance. The Global Financial Crisis

(GFC) of 2008 prompted regulatory reforms and stricter reporting standards to ensure transparency and stability in the industry.

Hedge funds are private, unconstrained investment vehicles that take long and short positions and use leverage. A long position involves buying an asset with the expectation of price appreciation, while a short position benefits from price decline. The hedge fund industry comprises various strategies that can broadly be categorized as Return Enhancers or Diversifiers.

Return Enhancers are typically net long stocks seeking to outperform through both long and short positions. These strategies aim to enhance portfolio returns while providing a moderate level of diversification. An example is the long-short equity strategy, which involves buying undervalued stocks (long positions) and selling overvalued stocks (short positions) based on fundamental analysis.

Diversifiers are strategies expected to provide greater diversification benefits to investors. These strategies also take long and short positions but without a structural long bias. Global Macro is an example of a diversifying strategy

where investment decisions are based on top-down analysis of global macroeconomic trends and events and their impact on various asset classes. Investors focusing on uncorrelated hedge fund strategies can achieve substantial diversification benefits to enhance the risk adjusted performance of their portfolios.

Given the significant dispersion among hedge fund managers, the importance of manager selection and a rigorous due diligence process cannot be overlooked. The due diligence process includes Investment Due Diligence (IDD) and Operational Due Diligence (ODD) to assess the manager's investment and risk management processes.

In conclusion, hedge funds provide valuable exposure for navigating market volatility, and investors should consider the diverse nature of hedge fund strategies when constructing their portfolios. Conducting thorough due diligence, including IDD and ODD, is essential to ensure the effective implementation of strategy allocation with top-tier hedge fund managers. Investors lacking expertise in hedge fund investing should seek guidance from trusted advisors to achieve their desired outcomes.

## Other Voices

## OPEC+ in charge again!

By Kamel Al-Harami  
Independent Oil Analyst

There's no doubt that the oil organization's firm decision to reduce its global supply is effective, with all members fully committed. Even countries like Russia and Iraq, which initially delayed their decisions for a few months, are now onboard. Russia has committed to reducing its output by 900,000 barrels per day starting from the end of next month.

This could push the barrel price to a range of \$90 and perhaps beyond by the end of the year. There are two fundamental factors that are working together to achieve this - a tightening supply and an anticipated increase in demand.

Energy analysts are predicting strong oil prices in view of these factors as well as OPEC+ commitment to its full adherence to the agreed production quota. A growth in oil is expected to reach the range of 1.85 million barrels per day this year. This in turn is pushing speculators to anticipate higher value for oil amidst tight supply and OPEC+ full adherence to its production cuts.



Al-Harami

The true test will be in June when the organization will hold its meeting to determine their next course of action regarding the continuation of the agreed-upon production cuts.

With all members fully committed and in full agreement, any potential infrastructure challenges with oil production, particularly in Mexico and Russia, will further add more energy to strengthen the barrel price.

It now seems there is a consensus among financial institutions, including banks, and industry executives that oil prices will reach \$93-\$94 per barrel in the third quarter. However, it appears certain that OPEC+ will not welcome an oil price of \$100 per barrel and will consequently ease its production cuts. This is aimed to avoid demand from plummeting on one hand and to discourage others from reinvesting and taking away their solid market share on the other.

The oil organization is currently satisfied and does not want to disturb the momentum or cause the consumers to create noise.

OPEC+, which is now back in control, is committed to satisfying its long-term customers and avoiding any actions that could be solely blamed for higher inflation.

□ □ □

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# Global oil demand forecast steady for '24, OPEC report

Oil price drops to \$90.98 p/b on Friday

**VIENNA, April 13, (KUNA):** The global oil demand growth forecast for 2024 remains broadly unchanged from last month's assessment of 2.2 mb/d (million barrels per day), according to OPEC's Monthly Oil Market Report.

The MOMR - April 2024, released on Thursday, noted that slight adjustments were made to the 1Q-24 data, with a slight upward revision in OECD Europe and some non-OECD data, reflecting better-than-expected performance in oil demand data.

"This increase was offset by a downward revision to Africa in 1Q-24 and the Middle East in the first three quarters," it reads.

Accordingly, the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) is projected to expand by around 0.3 mb/d and the non-OECD by about 2.0 mb/d.

In 2025, global oil demand is expected to see robust growth of 1.8 mb/d, y-o-y (year-on-year).

The OECD is expected to grow by 0.1 mb/d, y-o-y, while demand in the non-OECD is forecast to increase by 1.7 mb/d.

The world economic growth forecasts for 2024 and 2025 remain unchanged at 2.8 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively, the report pointed out.

In the United States, economic growth for 2024 is revised up slightly to 2.1 percent, as the healthy momentum from 2H-23 is expected to carry into 2024, while the forecast for 2025 remains at 1.7 percent. The economic growth forecast for the Eurozone remains at 0.5 percent for 2024 and 1.2 percent for 2025.

Japan's economic growth forecast is also unchanged at 0.8 percent in 2024 and

one percent in 2025.

Meanwhile, China's economic growth forecast remains at 4.8 percent in 2024 and 4.6 percent in 2025. India's economic growth forecast is unchanged at 6.6 percent for 2024 and 6.3 percent for 2025.

Brazil's economic growth forecast remains at 1.6 percent for 2024, and 1.9 percent for 2025. The ongoing robust performance of Russia's economy leads to upward revisions for both the 2024 and 2025 growth forecasts, now standing at two percent and 1.4 percent, respectively.

Regarding crude oil price movements, the report said the OPEC Reference Basket (ORB) value increased by USD 2.99 or 3.7 percent in March, m-o-m, to average USD 84.22/b.

Oil futures prices averaged higher, with the ICE Brent front-month contract rising by USD 2.95, or 3.6 percent, m-o-m, to USD 84.67/b, and the NYMEX WTI front-month contract up by USD 3.80, or 5.0 percent, m-o-m, to average at USD 80.41/b.

The DME Oman front-month contract rose by USD 3.30, or 4.1 percent, m-o-m, to settle at USD 84.25/b.

The front-month ICE Brent/NYMEX WTI spread narrowed further by 85¢ to average USD 4.26/b. The market structures of oil futures prices strengthened and remained in backwardation as money managers turned increasingly bullish about oil.

Also:

**KUWAIT CITY:** The price of Kuwait oil went down 42 cents to USD 90.98 per barrel on Friday as opposed to USD 91.40 pb the day before, said the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday.

The price of the Brent crude and the West Texas Intermediate respectively went up by 71 and 64 cents, settling each at USD 90.45 pb and USD 85.66 pb.

## Saudi Arabia tops global oil exports

# Kuwait ranks seventh in crude oil exporting countries

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13:** Crude oil is indeed a cornerstone of the global economy, serving as a vital raw material for various industries, reports Al-Anba daily.

Following is the list of top oil exporting countries and their significant contributions to the global oil trade:

Saudi Arabia -- Reigning at the top of the list, Saudi Arabia exported \$236 billion worth of oil in 2022, comprising

16.2% of global oil exports. With vast reserves and substantial production capabilities, Saudi Arabia plays a pivotal role in global oil markets.

Russia -- Following closely, Russia accounted for 9.14% of global oil exports in 2022, with a value of \$133 billion. Russia's expansive oil industry, led by major players like Rosneft and Gazprom, contributes significantly to its export prowess.

United Arab Emirates (UAE) -- The UAE exported \$105 billion worth of oil in 2022, contributing 7.24% to global oil exports.

Norway -- Norway stands out as the eighth-largest oil exporter, with exports totaling \$58.9 billion in 2021. The country's substantial reserves and strategic location contribute to its significant role in European oil markets.

Kuwait -- Despite its small size, Kuwait maintains a prominent position as a major oil exporter, accounting for

Canada -- Canada emerges as the third-largest oil exporter, with exports totaling \$123 billion in 2022, constituting 8.48% of global exports. The country's rich oil sands in Alberta are a key driver of its oil production and export capacity.

United States -- Despite being a significant consumer, the United States stands as the fourth-largest oil exporter, with exports valued at \$118 billion 4.31% of global oil exports in 2022, with exports valued at \$62.6 billion.

Norway -- Norway stands out as the eighth-largest oil exporter, with exports totaling \$58.9 billion in 2021. The country's substantial reserves and strategic location contribute to its significant role in European oil markets.

Nigeria -- Nigeria, with its vast reserves, exported \$52.1 billion worth of

oil in 2022, representing 8.16% of global exports. The U.S. has witnessed a surge in oil production in recent years, bolstering its export capabilities.

Iraq -- Iraq holds the position of the second-largest exporter in the Middle East, with oil revenues reaching \$111 billion in 2022, accounting for 7.62% of total exports. Despite facing challenges, Iraq's oil reserves remain a vital asset for its economy.

Kazakhstan -- Rounding off the list, Kazakhstan exported \$47.6 billion worth of oil in 2022, comprising 3.28% of global exports. Kazakhstan's growing oil production contributes to its rising prominence in the global oil trade.

## Pressure on Erdogan

# Turkey, Israel impose mutual trade barriers

**ANKARA, April 13, (AP):** Turkey and Israel announced trade barriers on each other Tuesday as relations deteriorated further amid the war in Gaza.

Turkey, a staunch critic of Israel's military actions in the territory, announced that it was restricting exports of 54 types of products to Israel with immediate effect. They include aluminum, steel, construction products, jet fuel and chemical fertilizers. In response, Israel said it was preparing a ban on products from Turkey.

The announcements came a day after Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Israel had barred Turkish military cargo planes from joining an operation to airdrop humanitarian aid to Gaza and vowed to respond with a series of measures against Israel until it declares a cease-fire and allows aid to flow in without interruptions.

"There is no excuse for Israel to block our attempt to deliver aid by air to starving people of Gaza," Fidan said.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government, which suffered major setbacks in local elections last month, is faced with intense pressure at home to halt trade with Israel. Critics accuse the government of engaging in double standards by leveling strong accusations against Israel while continuing lucrative commercial relations.

Erdogan, whose ruling party has roots in Turkey's Islamic movement, has been an outspoken critic of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians since taking office in 2003.

The Turkish leader stepped up his criticism of Israel following its military offensive in Gaza, describing Israel's actions as war crimes verging on "genocide" and asserting that

the Hamas militant group, considered a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and European Union, is fighting for the liberation of its lands and people.

In a post on X, Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz said Erdogan was "once again sacrificing the economic interests of the people of Turkey for his support of the Hamas murderers in Gaza."

In the same post, he said he had contacted organizations in the U.S. and asked them to stop investing in Turkey and refrain from importing Turkish goods.

Hamish Kinnear, senior Middle East and North Africa analyst at Britain-based risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft, said domestic considerations were behind Turkey's decision to slap trade restrictions on Israel, saying Erdogan's ruling party was trying to "rally its base in the wake of defeat in local elections."

"Reduced bilateral trade will be the result, especially if Israel retaliates with trade restrictions of its own," Kinnear said. "Turkey's government has likely made the calculation that damaged trade ties are worth it for the potential gain in domestic political support."

Turkish exports to Israel amounted to \$5.4 billion in 2023, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute.

Turkey and Israel had normalized ties by appointing ambassadors to their respective countries in 2022, following years of tensions.

Since January, Turkish authorities have detained dozens of people, including private detectives, on suspicion of spying for Israel, mostly on Palestinians living in Turkey.



KUNA photo  
Kuwait Petroleum Corporation CEO Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah during his visit to the Kuwait National Petroleum Company.

## KPC chief emphasizes integration with subsidiaries

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sheikh Nawaf Saud Al-Sabah stressed seriousness to achieve integration between the corporation and its subsidiaries, mainly the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) and the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company (KIPIIC).

In a KPC statement sent to KUNA after a visit paid to the two companies, Sheikh Nawaf affirmed that the corporation would focus on this goal in the coming period. Sheikh Nawaf visited also Mina Al-Ahmadi and Mina

Abdullah refineries, and Al Zour Refinery affiliated with the KNPC and the KIPIIC respectively.

Congratulating workers on Eid Al-Fitr during his visit, Sheikh Nawaf was received by CEO of KNPC and acting CEO of KIPIIC Wadhwa al-Khateeb, who affirmed that the oil sectors' senior officials believe in the significance of integration among its companies.

She expressed optimism about the success of the integration efforts, as the companies have carried out several joint successful projects. (KUNA)

**Switzerland lays out new 'too big to fail' rules**

The Swiss government Wednesday announced steps to bolster its "too big to fail" rules aimed at avoiding potentially disastrous fallout from banking sector turmoil after woes last year at Credit Suisse before it was taken over by rival UBS.

Finance Minister Karin Keller-Sutter told reporters that the measures will aim to protect taxpayers - who were briefly on the hook to avoid a major banking sector collapse - and the Swiss economy overall.

She said the steps would also involve "targeted and effective" proposals that help boost liquidity at financial institutions and rein in excessive bonuses enjoyed by some bankers.

The announcement follows a monthlong review by Swiss authorities that "revealed gaps" in the current regulation, and involves a package of 22 measures, a government statement said.

"Implementation of the package

should significantly reduce the likelihood that another systematically important bank in Switzerland will experience a severe crisis and that emergency measures by the state will be necessary," it said.

Among the possible measures could be a move - long-sought by critics who say Swiss banking rules have been too lax - to strengthen the Swiss financial markets regulator FINMA to allow it to levy fines for wrongdoing. (AP)

**delicate balance needed in the global monetary policy**

Kristalina Georgieva, the head of the International Monetary Fund, expressed concerns on Thursday regarding the impact of high interest rates in the United States on the global economy, reports Al-Jarida daily.

While acknowledging the Federal Reserve's prudent actions, she cautioned that prolonged high interest rates could pose challenges worldwide.

Georgieva suggested that the US government explore alternative measures to tackle inflation.

Speaking at an event hosted by the Atlantic Council, Georgieva emphasized that elevated interest rates in the US could lead to increased attractiveness for investments, drawing financial flows towards the country. However, she highlighted the adverse effects on other econo-

mies, which may experience difficulties as a result.

Georgieva's remarks underscore the delicate balance needed in global monetary policy, where decisions made by one country can have significant ramifications for the rest of the world. She urged for careful consideration and coordination to mitigate any adverse impacts on global economic stability.

# As the world's banks wrestle with when to cut rates, Europe signals it's ready to move

Thursday's stance 'officially opens the door to a June rate cut'

**FRANKFURT, Germany, April 13, (AP): The European Central Bank signalled Thursday it could cut interest rates at its next meeting in June, a big step as the rich world's central banks, including the U.S. Federal Reserve, wrestle with how soon declining inflation will let them lower credit costs for business and consumers.**

The bank left its key rate benchmarks unchanged at a record high of 4%, but bank President Christine Lagarde said a rate cut was now on the table.

If incoming data confirm inflation's decline, "it would be appropriate to reduce the current level of monetary policy restriction," she said at her post-decision news conference.

The policy meeting at the bank's skyscraper headquarters in Frankfurt was widely regarded as a prelude to the June 6 meeting, after Lagarde had dropped a broad hint by saying that the bank would have more information on the path of inflation at that meeting.

Thursday's stance "officially opens the door to a June rate cut," said Carsten Brzeski, chief of global macro at ING bank. "This is the first time the ECB has talked about rate cuts in its official policy announcement."

The decision comes as the rich world's central banks are tilting toward undoing some of the sharp hikes to interest rates that were imposed with the goal of getting inflation under control. The Swiss National Bank was the first major central bank to cut rates in the current cycle on March 21. The big exception is Japan, which raised rates for the first time in 17 years on March 19.

It's a policy shift closely watched by stock investors. Markets soared in recent months on expectations of lower rates by this summer. Broad stock market index-

**Japan not ruling out any options on excessive currency moves**

TOKYO, April 13, (KUNA): Japanese Finance Minister Shunichi Suzuki said Thursday the government will respond appropriately to excessive currency moves without excluding any options, expressing displeasure with rapid foreign exchange movements.

"We are not only looking at levels such as JPY 152 or JPY 153, but also analyzing the background behind this," Suzuki told reporters.

Stressing that currencies should move in a stable manner reflecting fundamen-

tals, Suzuki said the government is closely watching foreign exchange moves with "high sense of urgency."

The minister made remarks after the Japanese yen fell to a 34-year low at the JPY 153 level against the US dollar on Thursday.

The weak yen supports exports by making Japanese products more competitive overseas and increases their overseas profits when converted into local currency, but it also inflates import prices.

es fell immediately in the U.S. on Wednesday and bond prices rose after a hotter than expected inflation reading of 3.5% for March raised fears that the Fed may wait longer than previously thought to lower its benchmark interest rate.

Lagarde said the ECB's actions on rates were based on Europe's inflation data, and only took U.S. inflation into account as part of the bigger global picture including China, Japan and emerging markets. "We have to determine monetary policy decisions on the basis of the data that are produced by the euro area, on the basis of the global environment," she said.

The drivers of inflation in the U.S. are different, she said, and "the two economies are not the same."

Inflation in the 20 European Union member countries that use the euro currency, and where the ECB sets interest rate policy, has fallen to 2.4% in March, down from a peak of 10.6% in October 2023.

Economists say U.S. inflation was driven by large-scale government spending, while Europe's price spike came from an outside shock: Russia cutting off most

supplies of cheap natural gas after its invasion of Ukraine. Energy prices have now fallen to pre-war levels, and inflation levels have gradually eased as a result.

Higher rates help squelch inflation by raising the cost of borrowing to buy things, which can cool demand for goods - but they can also slow growth if overdone or maintained for too long. And growth in Europe has been anemic to say the least. The eurozone economy didn't grow at all in the last three months of last year and the outlook for the figures from the quarter just ended isn't much better.

The central bank's benchmarks guide the costs of borrowing for banks, and through that influence rates throughout the economy, from business credit lines to mortgages and credit cards to government bonds.

Rate cuts can boost stocks because they suggest the central bank sees a strong economy ahead that will boost corporate profits, and because lower interest rates make stocks relatively more attractive compared with interest-bearing holdings such as bonds or CDs.

**'Risks to China's public finances are rising'**

## Beijing says economy 'stable,' rejects Fitch's downgrade of its fiscal outlook

BANGKOK, April 13, (AP): China's Finance Ministry denounced a report by Fitch Ratings that kept its sovereign debt rated at A+ but downgraded its outlook to negative, saying Wednesday that China's deficit is at a moderate and reasonable level and risks are under control.

Risks to China's public finances are rising, Fitch said, as Beijing works to resolve mounting local and regional government debts and to shift away from heavy reliance on its troubled property industry to drive economic growth.

But while slower growth is adding to the challenges of coping with heavy borrowing, Fitch said it kept China's A+ rating due to its "large and diversified economy," its vital role in global trade and its huge foreign exchange reserves.

The Finance Ministry said it was a "pity" that Fitch had downgraded its sovereign debt and faulted its methods, saying it had failed to take into account Beijing's moves toward "appropriately intensifying, improving quality and efficiency" of its government spending.

"In the long run, maintaining a moderate deficit and making good use of precious debt funds will help expand domestic demand, support economic growth, and ultimately help maintain good sovereign credit," the ministry said.

"Overall, our country's local government debt resolution work is progressing in an orderly manner and risks are generally controllable," it said.

Fitch's report noted that China's general government deficit was forecast to rise this year to 7.1% of its GDP, up from 5.8% in 2023. The median for countries with an "A" rating is 3.0%, it said. China's average deficit to GDP ratio averaged 3.1% in 2015-2019 but jumped to 8.6% in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tax relief measures and weaker property investments, which are usually a main source of local tax revenue, have eroded the government's capacity to collect tax revenues to offset higher spending, the report said.

Fitch forecasts that China's economy will expand at a 4.5% annual rate this year, down from 5.2% last year, due to the downturn in the property sector and lackluster consumer spending, though it said higher government spending is likely to help make up for some of that weakness.



Workers wait for transport outside a construction site in Beijing, Tuesday, April 9, 2024. China's Finance Ministry has denounced a report by Fitch Ratings that kept its sovereign debt rated at A+ but downgraded its outlook to negative, saying in a statement that China's deficit is at a moderate and reasonable level and risks are under control. (AP)

## China remains top merchandise exporter in '23 for 7th straight yr

BEIJING, April 13, (Xinhua): China remained the top merchandise exporter in 2023 for the seventh straight year with its share in world exports at 14.2 percent, almost the same as the level in 2022, the Ministry of Commerce said.

The ministry made the remarks in response to the latest edition of World Trade Organization's (WTO) "Global Trade Outlook and Statistics," which foresees a gradual recovery in world merchandise trade volume in 2024 and

2025, following a contraction in 2023.

China stayed as the second top merchandise importer in 2023 with a share of 10.6 percent, basically the same with the level in 2022, the ministry said.

Despite the difficult recovery of the world economy, China has maintained steady performances in world merchandise trade, showing strong growth resilience, the ministry noted.

This showed that China's qual-

ity products are welcomed by the global market and imports into China's large domestic market have helped drive the economic growth of other countries, the ministry said.

The WTO report also cautioned that there is a high degree of uncertainty associated with the current forecast due to the large number of risk factors present in the global economy, including regional conflicts, geopolitical tensions, and rising protectionism.

Moody's, downgraded China's credit rating outlook in December, ING economists noted in a report Wednesday.

It said that "in general we can observe that the debt situation has worsened rapidly since the pandemic."

Fitch's move reflects the dilemma all policymakers face, it said.

**Steelworkers vote to strike**

## Ex-Fed chair finds 'significant shortfalls' in BoE forecasting

LONDON, April 13, (AP): A review of the Bank of England's economic forecasting that was published Friday and undertaken by Ben Bernanke, the former chair of the U.S. Federal Reserve, has found "significant shortcomings" that should be addressed to better inform future interest rate decisions.

Following widespread criticism about the Bank of England's forecasts, Bernanke was tasked last year to review the forecasting models.

Though noting that all central banks have had problems over the past few years as a result of a series of economic shocks, notably the coronavirus pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis heightened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Bernanke said the Bank of England's issues were made worse by out-of-date software that had not been properly maintained.

The review said that "insufficient resources have been devoted to ensuring that the software and models underlying the forecast are adequately maintained."

Bernanke, who led the Fed between 2006 and 2014, a period that included the global financial crisis, made a series of recommendations that the Bank of England said it was committed to fulfilling.

Bank of England Gov. Andrew Bailey said the review was a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" for the central bank to update its models and make them fit for purpose to a "more uncertain world."

One recommendation is that the Bank of England start producing its own forecasts of what might happen to interest rates in future, something that could help inform its inflation forecasts.

Over the past couple of years, the Bank of England has faced criticism for being too slow to respond to surging inflation stoked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which sent energy costs soaring, and supply issues connected to the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions.

As a result, critics have argued that inflation ended up rising higher than it should have done to a multidecade high of more than 11% - 2 percentage points more than in the U.S., for example.

The consequence of that, they say, is that the Bank of England's rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee then had to raise interest rates by more than would otherwise have been required and will have to stay higher for longer. The bank's main interest rate has been held at 5.25% since August.

Higher interest rates, which cool the economy by making it more expensive to borrow, thereby bearing down on spending, have contributed to easing inflation worldwide, though they also have affected economic activity. The British economy has barely grown over the past year, and few economists expect much of an uptick in 2024.

**Also:**

LONDON, Steelworkers at Britain's largest steel production plant voted to strike for the first time in around 40 years to protest the planned loss of 2,800 jobs by Indian owner Tata Steel, union officials said Thursday.

The Unite trade union said 1,500 of its members at the south Wales plant and the nearby smaller Newport Llanwern processing plant backed the strike action.

In January, Tata said it would close both blast furnaces at Port Talbot as part of plans to make its unprofitable U.K. operation leaner and greener, replacing them with more environmentally friendly electric arc furnaces.

Unite said Tata has other choices after the union secured a commitment from the main Labour Party opposition that it will invest 3 billion pounds (\$3.8 billion) in U.K. steel, compared with the 500 million pounds pledged by the current Conservative government. That potentially matters as Labour is way ahead of the Conservatives in opinion polls ahead of a general election that is expected to take place by the fall.

"In the U.K., Tata's plans and those of the government reflect the short-term thinking of a clapped-out disinterested government marking time to a general election," said Union General Secretary Sharon Graham.

She said the vote in favor of striking happened despite threats from Tata that enhanced redundancy packages would be withdrawn if workers went on strike.

Tata has said that its plans to switch from coal-fired blast furnaces to an electric arc furnace, which produces steel from scrap metal, needs fewer workers and that 2,500 jobs will go by the middle of next year, with a further 300 at longer-term risk. Both blast furnaces are due to be shut this year, with the new electric furnace installed by 2027.

Tata said after the vote that its plan remains in place.

"Our ambition remains to move forward at pace with a just transition, and to become the center of a future green sustainable industrial ecosystem in the U.K.," a spokesperson for the company said.

The news of the closure of the blast furnaces is a major blow to Port Talbot, a town of about 35,000 people whose economy has been built on the steel industry since the early 1900s. Fewer than 1,000 people are expected to be employed at the plant if the restructuring takes place.

At its height in the 1960s, the Port Talbot steelworks employed around 20,000 people, before cheaper offerings from China and other countries hit production. More than 300,000 people worked in Britain's steel industry in 1971; by 2021 it was about 26,000.

The steel industry now accounts for 0.1% of the British economy and 2.4% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions, according to research by the House of Commons Library.

## INNOVATION

## Business Plus



From bias to brain drain

## Artificial intelligence threatens human decision skills



US Rep. Don Beyer, D-Va., speaks at the Capitol in Washington, Sept. 9, 2021. To educate themselves on Artificial Intelligence, lawmakers have created a task force and invited experts to explain how AI could transform our lives. Beyer is taking it even further by enrolling in college to get a Master's degree in machine learning. (AP)

Humans are well known for being prone to a wide range of biases because we tend to be frugal when it comes to expending mental energy,

**By Joe Árvai**  
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The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

As artificial intelligence creeps further into people's daily lives, so do worries about it. At the most alarmist are concerns about AI going rogue and terminating its human masters.

But behind the calls for a pause on the development of AI is a suite of more tangible social ills. Among them are the risks AI poses to people's privacy and dignity and the inevitable fact that, because the algorithms under

AI's hood are programmed by humans, it is just as biased and discriminatory as many of us. Throw in the lack of transparency about how AI is designed, and by whom, and it's easy to understand why so much time these days is devoted to debating its risks as much as its potential.

But my own research as a psychologist who studies how people make decisions leads me to believe that all these risks are overshadowed by an even more corrupting, though largely invisible, threat. That is, AI is mere keystrokes away from making people even less disciplined and skilled when it comes to thoughtful decisions.

The process of making thoughtful decisions involves three common sense steps that begin with taking time to understand the task or problem you're

confronted with. Ask yourself, what is it that you need to know, and what do you need to do in order to make a decision that you'll be able to credibly and confidently defend later?

The answers to these questions hinge on actively seeking out information that both fills gaps in your knowledge and challenges your prior beliefs and assumptions. In fact, it's this counterfactual information - alternative possibilities that emerge when people unburden themselves of certain assumptions - that ultimately equips you to defend your decisions when they are criticized.

The second step is seeking out and considering more than one option at a time. Want to improve your quality of life? Whether it's who you vote for, the jobs you accept or the things you buy, there's always more than one road that

will get you there. Expending the effort to actively consider and rate at least a few plausible options, and in a manner that is honest about the trade-offs you are willing to make across their pros and cons, is a hallmark of a thoughtful and defensible choice.

The third step is being willing to delay closure on a decision until after you've done all the necessary heavy mental lifting. It's no secret: Closure feels good because it means you've put a difficult or important decision behind you. But the cost of moving on prematurely can be much higher than taking the time to do your homework. If you don't believe me, just think about all those times you let your feelings guide you, only to experience regret because you didn't take the time to think a little harder.

None of these three steps are terribly difficult to take. But, for most, they're not intuitive either. Making thoughtful and defensible decisions requires practice and self-discipline. And this is where the hidden harm that AI exposes people to comes in: AI does most of its "thinking" behind the scenes and presents users with answers that are stripped of context and deliberation. Worse, AI robs people of the opportunity to practice the process of making thoughtful and defensible decisions on their own.

Consider how people approach many important decisions today. Humans are well known for being prone to a wide range of biases because we tend to be frugal when it comes to expending mental energy. This frugality leads people to like it when seemingly good or trustworthy decisions are made for them. And we are social animals who tend to value the security and acceptance of their communities more than they might value their own autonomy.

Add AI to the mix and the result is a dangerous feedback loop: The data that AI is mining to fuel its algorithms is made up of people's biased decisions that also reflect the pressure of conformity instead of the wisdom of critical reasoning. But because people like having decisions made for them, they tend to accept these bad decisions and move on to the next one. In the end, neither we nor AI end up the wiser.

It would be wrongheaded to argue that AI won't offer any benefits to society. It most likely will, especially in fields like cybersecurity, health care and finance, where complex models and massive amounts of data need to be analyzed routinely and quickly. However, most of our day-to-day decisions don't require this kind of analytic horsepower.

But whether we asked for it or not, many of us have already received advice from - and work performed by - AI in settings ranging from entertainment and travel to schoolwork, health care and finance. And designers are hard at work on next-generation AI that will be able to automate even more of our daily decisions. And this, in my view, is dangerous.

In a world where what and how people think is already under siege thanks to the algorithms of social media, we risk putting ourselves in an even more perilous position if we allow AI to reach a level of sophistication where it can make all kinds of decisions on our behalf. Indeed, we owe it to ourselves to resist the siren's call of AI and take back ownership of the true privilege - and responsibility - of being human: being able to think and choose for ourselves. We'll feel better and, importantly, be better if we do. (AP)

## Bid to balance brain privacy in digital era

## Battle for thought control in neurotech age

Brain-computer interfaces, called BCIs, have rightfully prompted debate about the appropriate limits of technologies that interact with the nervous system,

**By Parker Crutchfield**  
Western Michigan University

The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.

Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, never wrote things down. He warned that writing undermines memory - that it is nothing but a reminder to people who discuss and debate, readers "will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing; they will appear to be omniscient and will generally know nothing."

These views may seem peculiar, but his central fear is a timeless one: that technology threatens thought. In the 1950s, Americans panicked about the possibility that advertisers would use subliminal messages hidden in movies to trick consumers into buying things they didn't really want. Today, the U.S. is in the middle of a similar panic over TikTok, with critics worried about its impact on viewers' freedom of thought.

To many people, neurotechnologies seem especially threatening, although they are still in their infancy. In January 2024, Elon Musk announced that his company Neuralink had implanted a brain chip in its first human subject - though they accomplished such a feat well after competitors. Fast-forward to March, and that person can already play

chess with just his thoughts.

Brain-computer interfaces, called BCIs, have rightfully prompted debate about the appropriate limits of technologies that interact with the nervous system. Looking ahead to the day when wearable and implantable devices may be more widespread, the United Nations has discussed regulations and restrictions on BCIs and related neurotech. Chile has even enshrined neurorights - special protections for brain activity - in its constitution, while other countries are considering doing so.

A cornerstone of neurorights is the idea that all people have a fundamental right to determine what state their brain is in and who is allowed to access that information, the way that people ordinarily have a right to determine what is done with their bodies and property. It's commonly equated with "freedom of thought."

Many ethicists and policymakers think this right to mental self-determination is so fundamental that it is never OK to undermine it, and that institutions should impose strict limits on neurotech.

But as my research on neurorights argues, protecting the mind isn't nearly as easy as protecting bodies and property.

Creating rules that protect a person's ability to determine what is done to their body is relatively straightforward. The body has clear boundaries, and things that cross it without permission are not allowed. It is normally obvious

when a person violates laws prohibiting assault or battery, for example.

The same is true about regulations that protect a person's property. Protecting body and property are some of the central reasons people come together to form governments.

Generally, people can enjoy these protections without dramatically limiting how others want to live their lives.

The difficulty with establishing neurorights, on the other hand, is that, unlike bodies and property, brains and minds are under constant influence from outside forces. It's not possible to fence off a person's mind such that nothing gets in.

Instead, a person's thoughts are largely the product of other peoples' thoughts and actions. Everything from how a person perceives colors

and shapes to our most basic beliefs are influenced by what others say and do. The human mind is like a sponge, soaking up whatever it happens to be immersed in. Regulations might be able to control the types of liquid in the bucket, but they can't protect the sponge from getting wet.

Even if that were possible - if there were a way to regulate people's actions so that they don't influence others' thoughts at all - the regulations would be so burdensome that no one would be able to do much of anything.

If I'm not allowed to influence others' thoughts, then I can never leave my house, because just by my doing so I'm causing people to think and act in

certain ways. And as the internet further expands a person's reach, not only would I not be able to leave the house, I also wouldn't be able to "like" a post on Facebook, leave a product review, or comment on an article.

In other words, protecting one aspect of freedom of thought - someone's ability to shield themselves from outside influences - can conflict with another aspect of freedom of thought: freedom of speech, or someone's ability to express ideas.

But there's another concern at play: privacy. People may not be able to completely control what gets into their heads, but they should have significant control over what goes out - and some people believe societies need "neurorights" regulations to ensure that. Neurotech represents a new threat to our ability to control what thoughts people reveal to others.

There are ongoing efforts, for example, to develop wearable neurotech that would read and adjust the customer's brainwaves to help them improve their mood or get better sleep. Even though such devices can only be used with the consent of the user, they still take information out of the brain, interpret it, store it and use it for other purposes.

In experiments, it is also becoming easier to use technology to gauge someone's thoughts. Functional magnetic resonance imaging, or fMRI, can be used to measure changes in blood flow in the brain and produce images of that activity. Artificial intelligence can then

analyze those images to interpret what a person is thinking.

Neurotechnology critics fear that as the field develops, it will be possible to extract information about brain activity regardless of whether or not someone wants to disclose it. Hypothetically, that information could one day be used in a range of contexts, from research for new devices to courts of law.

Regulation may be necessary to protect people from neurotech taking information out. For example, nations could prohibit companies that make commercial neurotech devices, like those meant to improve the wearer's sleep from storing the brainwave data those devices collect.

Yet I would argue that it may not be necessary, or even feasible, to protect against neurotech putting information into our brains - though it is hard to predict what capabilities neurotech will have even a few years from now.

In part, this is because I believe people tend to overestimate the difference between neurotech and other types of external influence. Think about books. Horror novelist Stephen King has said that writing is telepathy: When an author writes a sentence - say, describing a shotgun over the fireplace - they spark a specific thought in the reader.

In addition, there are already strong protections on bodies and property, which I believe could be used to prosecute anyone who forces invasive or wearable neurotech upon another person. (AP)

editor's choice



# Cannes sets lineup with Lanthimos, Coppola and Trump film

LOS ANGELES, April 13, (AP) — New films from Yorgos Lanthimos, Andrea Arnold and Francis Ford Coppola, as well as a portrait of 1980s Donald Trump, will compete for the Palme d'Or at the 77th Cannes Film Festival next month, organizers announced recently.

Thierry Frémaux, Cannes' artistic director who announced the selections in a news conference in Paris with festival president Iris Knobloch, said this year's lineup was plucked from 2,000 submissions. Though Frémaux noted he went into the process concerned about the effect of last year's strikes on American films, the lineup is typically full of top international filmmakers as well as a few hotly anticipated blockbusters.

Among the 19 films selected for competition is Lanthimos' "Kinds of Kindness," the Greek director's follow-up to the Oscar-winning "Poor Things." Its cast includes two stars of "Poor Things": Emma Stone and Willem Dafoe.

Paolo Sorrentino, the Italian filmmaker of "The Great Beauty," returns to Cannes with "Parthenope," a Naples-set drama co-starring Gary Oldman. Arnold, the British director of "American Honey" and "Fish Tank," also returns to Cannes with "Bird," starring Barry Keoghan and Franz Rogowski.

Sure to draw attention will be Ali Abbasi's "The Apprentice," a film about the former president's early business career. In it, Sebastian Stan stars as Trump. Jeremy Strong plays Roy Cohn and Maria Bakalova co-stars as Ivana Trump. The Iranian director Abbasi was previously in competition at Cannes with 2022's "Holy Spider."

Numerous other big-name filmmakers are also returning to Cannes, which runs May 14-25. Among them: David Cronenberg ("The

Shrouds," with Vincent Cassel and Diane Kruger); Paul Schrader ("Oh, Canada," with Richard Gere and Uma Thurman) and the lauded Chinese director Jia Zhang-Ke ("Caught By the Tides"). Also in competition are Sean Baker ("Anora"), whose "Red Rocket" and "The Florida Project" also premiered at Cannes; and the French filmmaker Jacques Audiard ("Emilia Perez"), who won the Palme in 2015 for "Dheepan."

As previously reported, Francis Ford Coppola's "Megalopolis" will premiere in competition in Cannes. The 85-year-old director's self-financed, long-gestating epic will debut 50 years after his "The Conversation" won the Palme d'Or.

## Nominations

This year's Cannes follows a banner 2023 edition that featured the premieres of three films that went on to win best-picture nominations at the Academy Awards: Martin Scorsese's "Killers of the Flower Moon"; Jonathan Glazer's "The Zone of Interest"; and Justine Triet's Palme d'Or winner "Anatomy of a Fall."

"Anatomy of a Fall" was only the third film directed by a woman to win the Palme. This year, there are four female filmmakers in competition. Frémaux said he may add further selections in the coming weeks.

Cannes had already lined up a few notable world premieres playing out of competition including George Miller's "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga" and Kevin Costner's "Horizon, An American Saga." George Lucas is set to receive an honorary Palme d'Or at the closing ceremony. The festival will kick off May 14 with the French comedy "The Second Act," starring Léa Seydoux and Vincent Lindon.

Greta Gerwig, coming off the success of "Barbie," is heading the jury that will decide the Palme d'Or. Some entries will take on added poignance, Frémaux noted, due to current events. Ukrainian filmmaker Sergei Loznitsa will debut his documentary "The Invasion," on Russia's war on his native country.

One new addition this year: The festival is launching a competitive immersive section featuring works of virtual and augmented reality.

Meanwhile, Kevin Costner's multi-episode epic "Horizon, An American Saga" will premiere at the Cannes.

The first chapter of "Horizon" will debut at the French film festival on May 19, giving the world its first glimpse of Costner's ambitious Western epic. The first two parts of "Horizon" are set to open in quick succession this summer, with Warner Bros. releasing chapter one in theaters June 28 and the second installment on Aug. 16.

"It's been 20 years since I've had the pleasure of being on the Croisette," Costner said in a statement. "I've been waiting for the right time to return and I'm proud to say that this time has come."

"The French have always supported films and believed deeply in filmmaking," added Costner. "Just as I believe deeply in my film."

"Horizon," which will screen out of competition at Cannes, is directed by Costner and stars him, Sienna Miller, Sam Worthington and Jena Malone.

The 77th Cannes Film Festival runs May 14-25. George Miller's "Furiosa: A Mad Max Saga," also from Warner Bros., was recently announced as another high-profile premiere at Cannes. The full lineup will be announced Thursday.

Film

## Variety

# Features

ARABO TIMES

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024



This image released by A24 shows Kirsten Dunst in a scene from 'Civil War.' (AP)

## Film

Dunst shines as war photographer Lee

# 'Civil War' chronicles America's collapse

By Lindsey Bahr

The United States is crumbling in Alex Garland's sharp new film "Civil War," a bellowing and haunting big screen experience. The country has been at war with itself for years by the time we're invited in, through the gaze of a few journalists documenting the chaos on the front lines and chasing an impossible interview with the president.

Garland, the writer-director of films like "Annihilation" and "Ex Machina," as well as the series "Devs," always seems to have an eye on the ugliest sides of humanity and our capacity for self-destruction. His themes are profound and his exploration of them sincere in films that are imbued with strange and haunting images that rattle around in your subconscious for far too long. Whatever you think of "Men," his most divisive film to date, it's unlikely anyone will forget Rory Kinnear giving birth to himself.

In "Civil War," starring Kirsten Dunst as a veteran war photographer named Lee, Garland is challenging his audience once again by not making the film about what everyone thinks it will, or should, be about. Yes, it's a politically divided country. Yes, the President (Nick Offerman) is a blustery, rising despot who has given himself a third term, taken to attacking his citizens and shut himself off from the press. Yes, there is one terrifying character played by Jesse Plemons who has some pretty hard lines about who is and isn't a real American.

But that trailer that had everyone talking is not the story. Garland is not so dull or narratively conservative to make the film about red and blue ideologies. All we really know is that the so-called Western Forces of Texas and California have seceded from the country and are closing in to overthrow the government. We don't know what they want or why, or what the other side wants or why and you start to realize that many of the characters don't seem to really know, or care, either.

This choice might be frustrating to some audiences, but it's also the only one that makes sense in a film focused on the kinds of journalists who put themselves in harm's way to tell the story of violent conflicts and unrest. As Lee explains to Cailee Spaeny's Jessie, a young, aspiring photographer who has elbowed her way onto their dangerous journey to Washington, questions are not for her to ask: She takes truthful, impartial pictures so that everyone else can.

## Violence

"Civil War" a film that is more about war reporters than anything else - the trauma of the beat, the vital importance of bearing witness and the moral and ethical dilemmas of impartiality. Dunst's Lee is having a bit of an existential crisis, having shot so many horrors and feeling as though she hasn't made any difference - violence and death are still everywhere. She's also a pro: Hardened and committed to the story and the image. Her colleague Joel (Wagner Moura) is more of an adrenaline junkie, chasing the gunfire and drinking himself into a stupor every night. There's Jessie (Spaeny), the wide-eyed but ambitious newbie who is in over her head, and the aging editor Sammy (the great Stephen McKinley Henderson), wise and buttoned up in Brooks Brothers and suspenders, who can't imagine a life outside of news even as his body is failing him. All are self-motivated and none of them have a life outside of the job, which might be a criticism for some movie characters but not here (trigger warning for any journalism audiences out there).

The group must drive an indirect route to get from New York to Washington as safely as possible, through Pittsburgh and West Virginia. The roads and towns are set-dressed a little bit, but anyone who knows the area will recognize familiar sights of dead malls, creaky off-brand gas stations on two lane roads, boarded up shops and overgrown parking lots that all work to provide an unsettlingly effective

backdrop for the bleak world of "Civil War."

Dunst and Spaeny are both exceedingly good in their roles, effectively embodying the veteran and the novice - a well-written, nuanced and evolving dynamic that should inspire post-credits debates and discussion (among other topics).

Dread permeates every frame, whether it's a quiet moment of smart conversation, a white-knuckle standoff or a deafening shootout on 17th street. And as with all Garland films it comes with a great, thoughtful soundtrack and a Sonoya Mizuno cameo.

Smart, compelling and challenging blockbusters don't come along that often, though this past year has had a relative embarrassment of riches with the likes of "Dune: Part Two" and "Oppenheimer." "Civil War" should be part of that conversation too. It's a full body theatrical experience that deserves a chance.

"Civil War," an A24 release in theaters Friday, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association for "strong, violent content, bloody/disturbing images and language throughout." Running time: 119 minutes. Three stars out of four.

## Also:

LOS ANGELES: Ethan Hawke and Pedro Pascal play cowboys and former lovers in Pedro Almodóvar's "Strange Way of Life," his 31-minute Western streaming on Netflix starting Sunday, April 14. At the film's Cannes premiere last year, Almodóvar, who famously turned down the opportunity to direct "Brokeback Mountain," said unlike the characters in that movie, he imagined these guys were really gunslingers in the vein of "The Wild Bunch." AP Film Writer Jake Coyle wrote at the time that "it's delightful to see Almodóvar at work in a new genre, yet just as at home, filling the frame with pops of color (Pascal's character wears a lime green jacket) and flourishes of emotion" and that it "extends yet another vibrant chapter in Almodóvar's filmography, now in its fifth decade." (AP)

NEW YORK: "The Talk" is ending its long-running daytime conversation.

The CBS talk show will end in December after 15 seasons, the network announced Friday.

"The Talk" was created by actor Sara Gilbert with the idea of a group of female hosts speaking about hot topics and current events, much like ABC's "The View." Gilbert said in a 2011 interview with The Associated Press that it was based on her actual group of "mom friends" who would gather to chat. She liked the idea of "a motley crew you would never really put together, but then suddenly there's all this commonality."

The show debuted in 2010 with hosts Gilbert, Sharon Osbourne, Julie Chen, Leah Remini and Holly Robinson Peete. Marissa Jaret Winokur was enlisted as a roving reporter who would be in the field. A hosting shake-up occurred after the first season. Winokur's position was axed, and Peete and Robinson were replaced by Sheryl Underwood and Aisha Tyler.

"The Talk" would go on to have a number of hosting changes over its run. In 2018, Chen left the show after her husband, then-CBS Corp. boss Les Moonves was fired due to sexual misconduct allegations. Gilbert left her on camera post in 2019 but remains an executive producer. Osbourne's departure in 2021 made headlines following a heated on-air discussion about racism between Osbourne and Underwood.

Underwood is the only person from the early days of "The Talk" who remains on the show today. She sits alongside Natalie Morales, Amanda Kloots, Jerry O'Connell and Akbar Gbajabiamila.

In a joint statement released by CBS, Amy Reisenbach, president of CBS Entertainment and David Stapf who is president of CBS Studios said: "It goes without saying that hosting and producing a year-round talk show is no easy task." They went on to express "sincere gratitude" to the hosts, producers and crew and recognized "former show hosts and colleagues who contributed throughout the seasons." (AP)

HOUSTON: Hip-hop artist Drake has been dismissed from a lawsuit over the deadly 2021 Astroworld

festival in Houston in which 10 people were killed, a judge has ruled.

Drake was a special guest of rap superstar Travis Scott, who had headlined the festival. He performed with Scott at the end of the concert on Nov. 5, 2021, as the crowd surged and attendees were packed so tightly that many could not breathe or move their arms or legs.



Gilbert



Drake

Authorities and festival organizers were trying to shut down the show.

The families of the 10 people who died during the concert, as well as hundreds who were injured, sued Drake, Scott and Live Nation - the festival's promoter - as well as dozens of other individuals and entities.

Many of those who were sued,

including Drake and Scott, have asked state District Judge Kristen Hawkins to dismiss the lawsuits against them. On Wednesday, Hawkins dismissed Drake from the case in a brief order.

Lawyers for Drake, whose full name is Aubrey Drake Graham, had argued during a court hearing April 1 in Houston that he was

not involved in putting the concert together so was not liable for the deaths and injuries that had occurred.

During a deposition he gave in November in Toronto, the Canadian rapper said in the moments before he took the stage, one told him that people in the crowd were suffering cardiac arrests or other injuries. (AP)

## People &amp; Places

## Obits

## Eleanor Coppola dead

## Fashion icon Roberto Cavalli dies at age 83

ROME, April 13, (AP) — Italian fashion designer **Roberto Cavalli**, known for a flamboyant, glamorous style and textile innovations, has died at age 83, his company announced Friday.

"Dear Roberto, you may not be physically here with us anymore but I know I will feel your spirit with me always," Fausto Puglisi, creative director at Roberto Cavalli since October 2020, wrote in an Instagram post.

"Rest in peace, you will be missed and you are loved by so many that your name will continue on, a beacon of inspiration for others, and especially for me," Puglisi added.

Born in Florence on Nov. 15, 1940, from a family of artists, Cavalli was orphaned of his father at just four years old, as he was killed in a Nazi roundup known as the Cavriglia massacre in 1944.

Cavalli became renowned in the early 1970s for his animal prints and an excessive, sexy style that remained his trademark throughout his long career.

"It is with deep regret and a great sadness the Roberto Cavalli Maison participates in the passing of its founder Roberto Cavalli," his company said in a statement. "From humble beginnings in Florence, Roberto succeeded in becoming a globally recognized name loved and respected by all. (His) legacy will live on via his creativity, his love of nature and via his family who he cherished."

After founding his own fashion house in the early 1970s, Cavalli quickly became an iconic brand, loved by top celebrities like Madonna, Gwyneth Paltrow and Beyoncé.

Cavalli patented a new printing method for leather and debuted the patchwork denim that was one of his trademarks in Florence's Palazzo Pitti in 1972. He revolutionized jeans, creating a sandblasting technique to give denim a distressed look, and adding Lycra to jeans to make them sexier, stretchy.

Cavalli took frequent inspiration from the natural world, featuring animal prints and fish-scale sequins. The Cavalli woman ranged from hippie to slick rocker, in diaphanous gowns that caught the air, seductive beaded dresses or sexy skinny suits.

He stepped back from designing about a decade ago, after ceding 90% of the company to the Clessidra private equity group. The company is now controlled by Auriel Investment SA.

"Don't call me a designer. My talent is rather finding what makes a fabric, a dress, a woman special, thinking always of fashion as if it is dream of ready-to-wear, something ready to be worn," he wrote in his autobiography, "Just Me," published in 2013.

He told The Associated Press in an interview that the woman he dressed was "a woman who believes a lot in herself. A woman who can show she is strong but at the same time soft and romantic."

Eleanor Coppola, who documented the making of some of her husband **Francis Ford Coppola's** iconic films, including the infamously tortured production of "Apocalypse Now," and who raised a family of filmmakers, has died. She was 87.

Coppola died Friday surrounded by family at home in Rutherford, California, her family announced in a statement. No cause of death was given.

Eleanor, who grew up in Orange County, California, met Francis while working as an assistant art director on his directorial debut, the **Roger Corman**-produced 1963 horror film "Dementia 13." (She had studied design at UCLA.) Within months of dating, Eleanor became pregnant and the couple were wed in Las Vegas in February 1963.

Their first-born, **Gian-Carlo**, quickly became a regular presence in his father's films, as did their subsequent children, **Roman** (born in 1965) and **Sofia** (born in 1971). After acting in their father's films and growing up on sets, all would go into the movies.

"I don't know what the family has given except I hope they've set an example of a family encouraging each other in their creative process whatever it may be," Eleanor told The Associated Press in 2017. "It happens in our family that everyone chose to sort of follow in the family business. We weren't asking them to or expecting them to, but they did. At one point Sofia said, 'The nut does not fall far from the tree.'"

Gian-Carlo, who's seen in the background of many of his father's films and had begun doing second-unit photography, died at the age of 22 in a 1986 boating accident. He was killed while riding in a boat piloted by **Griffin O'Neal**, son of **Ryan O'Neal**, who was found guilty of negligence.

Roman directed several movies of his own and regularly collaborates with **Wes Anderson**. He's president of his father's San Francisco-based film company, American Zoetrope.

Sofia became one of the most acclaimed filmmakers of her generation as the writer-director of films including "Lost in Translation" and the 2023 release "Priscilla." Sofia dedicated that film to her mother.

In joining the family business, the Coppola children weren't just following in their father's footsteps but their mother's, too. Beginning in 1979's "Apocalypse Now," Eleanor frequently documented the behind-the-scenes life of Francis' films. The Philippines-set shoot of "Apocalypse Now" lasted 238 days. A typhoon destroyed sets. **Martin Sheen** had a heart attack. A member of the construction crew died.

Eleanor documented much of the chaos in what would become one of the most famous making-of films about moviemaking, 1991's "Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse."

"I was just trying to keep myself occupied with something to do because we were out there for so long," Eleanor told CNN in 1991. "They wanted five minutes for a TV promotional or something and I thought sooner or later I could get five minutes of film and then it went on to 15 minutes."

"I just kept shooting but I had no idea ... the evolution of myself that I saw with my camera," continued Eleanor, who ended up shooting 60 hours worth of footage. "So, it was a surprise for both of us and a life changing experience."

Eleanor also published "Notes: On the Making of 'Apocalypse Now'" in 1979. While the film focused on the film set tumult, the book charted some of Eleanor's inner turmoil, including the challenges of being married to a larger-than-life figure. She wrote of being a "woman isolated from my friends, my affairs and my projects" during their year in Manila.



Cavalli



In this July 20, 2017 file photo, former NFL football star O.J. Simpson reacts after learning he was granted parole at Lovelock Correctional Center in Lovelock, Nev. Simpson, the decorated football superstar and Hollywood actor who was acquitted of charges he killed his former wife and her friend but later found liable in a separate civil trial, has died. He was 76. (AP)

## Obituary

## Legendary footballer leaves behind complicated legacy

## OJ Simpson dies after cancer battle

LAS VEGAS, April 13, (AP) — O.J. Simpson, the football star and Hollywood actor acquitted of charges he killed his former wife and her friend in a trial that mesmerized the public and exposed divisions on race and policing in America, has died. He was 76.

The family announced on Simpson's official X account that he died Wednesday of prostate cancer. He died in Las Vegas, officials there said Thursday.

Simpson earned fame, fortune and adulation through football and show business, but his legacy was forever changed by the June 1994 knife slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman in Los Angeles. He was later found liable for the deaths in a separate civil case, and then served nine years in prison on unrelated charges.

Goldman's father, Fred, and his sister, Kim, released a statement acknowledging that "the hope for true accountability has ended."

"The news of Ron's killer passing away is a mixed bag of complicated emotions and reminds us that the journey through grief is not linear," they wrote.

Live TV coverage of Simpson's arrest after a famous slow-speed chase marked a stunning fall from grace.

He had seemed to transcend racial barriers as the star tailback for college football's powerful University of Southern California Trojans in the late 1960s, as a rental-car ad pitchman rushing through airports in the late 1970s, and as the husband of a blond and blue-eyed high school homecoming queen in the 1980s.

"I'm not Black, I'm O.J.," he liked to tell friends.

His trial captured America's attention on live TV. The case sparked debates on race, gender, domestic abuse, celebrity justice and police misconduct.

Evidence found at the scene seemed overwhelmingly against Simpson. Blood drops, bloody footprints and a glove were there. Another glove, smeared with blood, was found at his home.

Simpson didn't testify, but the prosecution asked him to try on the gloves in court. He struggled to squeeze them

onto his hands and spoke his only three words of the trial: "They're too small."

His attorney Johnnie L. Cochran Jr. told the jurors, "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit."

The jury found him not guilty of murder in 1995, but a separate civil trial jury found him liable in 1997 for the deaths and ordered him to pay \$33.5 million to relatives of Brown and Goldman.

A decade later, still shadowed by the California wrongful death judgment, Simpson led five men he barely knew into a confrontation with two sports memorabilia dealers in a cramped Las Vegas hotel room. Two men with Simpson had guns. A jury convicted Simpson of armed robbery and other felonies.

Imprisoned at 61, he served nine years in a remote Nevada lockup, including a stint as a gym janitor. He wasn't contrite when he was released on parole in October 2017. The parole board heard him insist yet again that he was only trying to retrieve memorabilia and heirlooms stolen from him after his Los Angeles criminal trial.

## Judgment

"I've basically spent a conflict-free life, you know," said Simpson, whose parole ended in late 2021.

Public fascination with Simpson never faded. Many debated whether he had been punished in Las Vegas for his acquittal in Los Angeles. In 2016, he was the subject of an FX miniseries and a five-part ESPN documentary.

"I don't think most of America believes I did it," Simpson told The New York Times in 1995, a week after a jury determined he did not kill Brown and Goldman. "I've gotten thousands of letters and telegrams from people supporting me."

Twelve years later, following an outpouring of public outrage, Rupert Murdoch canceled a planned book by the News Corp.-owned HarperCollins in which Simpson offered his hypothetical account of the killings. It was to be titled "If I Did It."

Goldman's family, still doggedly pursuing the multimillion-dollar wrongful death judgment, won control of the manuscript. They retitled the

book "If I Did It: Confessions of the Killer."

"It's all blood money, and unfortunately I had to join the jackals," Simpson told The Associated Press at the time. He collected \$880,000 in advance money for the book, paid through a third party.

"It helped me get out of debt and secure my homestead," he said.

Less than two months after losing rights to the book, Simpson was arrested in Las Vegas.

Simpson played 11 NFL seasons, nine of them with the Buffalo Bills, where he became known as "The Juice" and ran behind an offensive line known as "The Electric Company." He won four NFL rushing titles, rushed for 11,236 yards in his career, scored 76 touchdowns and played in five Pro Bowls. His best season was 1973, when he ran for 2,003 yards — the first running back to break the 2,000-yard rushing mark.

"I was part of the history of the game," he said years later. "If I did nothing else in my life, I'd made my mark."

Simpson's football rise happened simultaneously with a television career. He signed a contract with ABC Sports the night he won the Heisman Trophy in 1968. That same year, he appeared on the NBC series "Dragnet" and "Ironside." During his pro career, Simpson was a color commentator for a decade on ABC followed by a stint on NBC. In 1983, he joined ABC's "Monday Night Football."

Simpson became a charismatic pitchman. In 1975, Hertz made him the first Black man hired for a corporate national ad campaign. The commercials, featuring Simpson running through airports toward the Hertz desk and young girls chanting "Go, O.J., go!" were ubiquitous.

Simpson made his big-screen debut in 1974's "The Klansman," an exploitation film in which he starred alongside Lee Marvin and Richard Burton. The film flopped, but Simpson would go on to appear in several dozen films and TV series, including 1974's "The Towering Inferno," 1976's "The Cassandra Crossing," 1977's "Roots" and 1977's "Capricorn One."

justice. Despite the government's crack-down on dissent and activism, her powerful words continue to inspire people across Vietnam and throughout the world." (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Mister Cee, one of hip-hop's pioneering DJs and a New York City radio personality who played an instrumental role in the Notorious B.I.G.'s debut album, has died. He was 57.

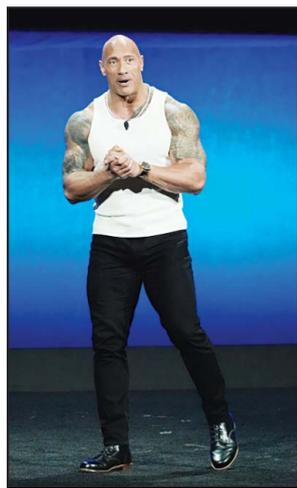
The famed disk jockey's death was confirmed Wednesday by **Skip Dillard**, the brand manager at 94.7 The Block NYC, where Cee had a show. The cause of death has not been announced.

"We've lost one of the most important figures in the industry," 94.7 The Block said in a social media post.

Mister Cee was a key player in the rap community. He was formerly **Big Daddy Kane's** DJ and an executive producer on The Notorious B.I.G.'s groundbreaking 1994 debut, "Ready to Die."

The New York native was also a radio personality on his hometown's Hot 97. But he briefly quit his gig in 2013 after arrests in connection with soliciting prostitutes. Audio of one encounter surfaced online.

After that last incident, Mister Cee denied trying to solicit sex from a male, and said an undercover female police officer approached him. He also denied being homosexual. (AP)



Dwayne Johnson, a cast member in the upcoming animated film "Moana 2," addresses the audience during the Walt Disney Studios presentation at CinemaCon 2024, April 11, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. (AP)



Mister Cee



Navalny

## Variety

NEW YORK: A memoir **Alexei Navalny** began working on in 2020 will be published this fall. "Patriot," which publisher **Alfred A. Knopf** is calling the late Russian opposition leader's "final letter to the world," will come out Oct. 22.

Navalny's widow, **Yulia Navalnaya**, said in a statement released Thursday to the publisher. "This book is a testament not only to Alexei's life, but to his unwavering commitment to the fight against dictatorship—a fight he gave everything for, including his life. Through his pages, readers will come to know the man I loved deeply—a man of profound integrity and unyielding courage. Sharing his story will not only honor his memory but also inspire others to stand up for what is right and to never lose sight of the values that truly matter."

Navalny, 47, died in February while serving a 19-year prison sentence on extremism charges that he condemned as politically motivated. He was jailed after returning from Germany in January 2021, where he was recuperating from the 2020 nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin, and was given three prison terms since.

He died in a remote penal colony above the Arctic Circle. Russian officials have vehemently denied involvement both in the poisoning and in his death.

According to Knopf, Navalny began working on the book in Germany, and continued writing it in Russia, both in and out of prison. (AP)

NEW YORK: Imprisoned Vietnamese author-blogger-journalist **Pham Doan Trang** will be this year's recipient of PEN America's Barby Freedom to Write Award, given by the literary and free expression organization to a "jailed writer of conscience."

Trang, 45, has written several books, among them "Politics of a Police State" and "Politics for the Common People." She has been a prominent critic of the Vietnamese government and a leading advocate for democratic reform who was beaten by police in 2015 and now walks with a limp. In 2020, she was arrested on charges of "propaganda against the state" and sentenced to nine years in prison.

PEN, Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders are among those who

have condemned her treatment.

"Pham Doan Trang has galvanized the Vietnamese people through her writings on democracy, human rights, environmental degradation, and women's empowerment,"

PEN CEO **Suzanne Nossel** said in a statement Thursday. "The Vietnamese government has persecuted and jailed Trang in an effort to still her voice. She has sacrificed her health and freedom in the pursuit of



Lupita Nyong'o, recipient of the Star of the Year award, poses at the Big Screen Achievement Awards during CinemaCon 2024, Thursday, April 11, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. (AP)

EU drug regulators clear Ozempic, Wegovy of suicidal thoughts

EMA finds no link between diabetes, weight-loss drugs and suicide

LONDON, April 13, (AP): Drug regulators in Europe have found no evidence that popular diabetes and weight-loss drugs like Ozempic and Wegovy are linked to a higher risk of suicidal thoughts or actions. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) regulatory committee announced the results of its review on Friday. It's the latest group to conclude there's no known tie between a new class of obesity drugs and suicide.

In January, the US Food and Drug Administration said a preliminary review showed no evidence of such a link, though the agency said it could not rule out that "a small risk may exist" and that it would continue to study the issue. A federally funded US study also found that people taking semaglutide, the medication in Ozempic and Wegovy, had a lower risk of suicidal thoughts than those taking older medications to treat diabetes and obesity.

The review by the European Union's regulators was triggered last July by anecdotal reports that people taking the

WASHINGTON, April 13, (AP): The company responsible for a global recall of sleep apnea machines will be barred from resuming production at US facilities until it meets a number of safety requirements, under a long-awaited settlement announced Tuesday by federal officials.

Philips will be required to overhaul its manufacturing and quality control systems and hire independent experts to vet the changes, according to a court order announced by the US Department

of Justice. The company must also continue to replace, repair or provide refunds to all US customers who got the defective devices, the department said.

The action is a major step toward resolving one of the biggest medical device recalls in history, which has dragged on for nearly three years.

Most of the devices recalled are continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, machines. They force air through a mask to keep mouth and nasal passageways open during sleep.

Left untreated, sleep apnea can lead to dangerous drowsiness and increased risk of heart attack.

Lawyers for the federal government alleged that the company failed to comply with good manufacturing practices needed to ensure device safety. The company did not admit to the allegations, according to the court filing.

"This office, the FDA and our partner agencies are committed to holding manufacturers accountable when they violate the law and put the public at

risk," U.S. Attorney Eric Olshan said in a statement.

Under the legal agreement, Philips must hire independent auditors to create a plan for fixing its manufacturing problems and for monitoring problems with the sleep devices. The plan must then be approved by the Food and Drug Administration. The experts must also certify that new foam selected by the company meets FDA safety standards.

Jeffrey Reed, of Marysville, Ohio, experienced persistent sinus infections

and two bouts of pneumonia during the seven years he used a Philips machine.

The FDA's website warns patients that the risks of ingesting the sound-dampening foam could include headache, asthma, allergic reactions and more serious problems.

An FDA inspection of Philips' Pennsylvania offices in the fall of 2021 uncovered a spate of red flags, including emails suggesting the company was warned of the problem with its foam six years before the recall.

medications used in nearly a dozen drugs used to treat the diseases. The group did not review information regarding tirz-

patide, the medication used in drugs sold as Mounjaro and Zepbound.

Both agencies said they would contin-

ue to closely monitor reports of suicidal thoughts or actions in people taking the drugs known as GLP-1 receptor agonists.

Patients taking the drugs should report any mental health or other problems to their health care providers, officials said.



In this March 27, 2019, file photo, a woman receives a measles, mumps and rubella vaccine at the Rockland County Health Department in Pomona, NY. (AP)

What's driving the increase?

US and global measles cases on the rise, threatening gains

NEW YORK, April 13, (AP): Measles outbreaks in the US and abroad are raising health experts' concern about the preventable, once-common childhood virus.

One of the world's most contagious diseases, measles can lead to potentially serious complications. The best defense, according to experts? Get vaccinated.

Here's what to know about the year - so far - in measles.

Nationwide, measles cases already are nearly double the total for all of last year.

The US Centers of Disease Control and Prevention documented 113 cases as of April 5. There have been seven outbreaks and most of US cases - 73% - are linked to those flare-ups.

Still, the count is lower than some recent years: 2014 saw 667 cases and 2019 had 1,274.

The 2019 measles epidemic was the worst in almost three decades, and threatened the United States' status as a country that has eliminated measles by stopping the continual spread of the measles virus.

The CDC on Thursday released a report on recent measles case trends, noting that cases in the first three months of this year were 17 times higher than the average number seen in the first three months of the previous three years.

While health officials seem to be doing a good job detecting and responding to outbreaks, "the rapid increase in the number of reported measles cases during the first quarter of 2024 repre-

sents a renewed threat to elimination," the report's authors said.

The disease is still common in many parts of the world, and measles reaches the U.S. through unvaccinated travelers.

According to Thursday's report, most of the recent importations involved unvaccinated Americans who got infected in the Middle East and Africa and brought measles back to the US.

Health officials confirmed measles cases in 17 states so far this year, including cases in New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago.

More than half of this year's cases come from the Chicago outbreak, where 61 people have contracted the virus as of Thursday, largely among people who lived in a migrant shelter.

Also:

MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday successfully test-launched a new heavy-lift rocket from its Far Eastern space complex, a lift-off that comes after two aborted attempts earlier this week.

The first attempt to launch the Angara-A5 rocket from the Vostochny spaceport on Tuesday was canceled about two minutes before the scheduled liftoff due to a failure of the pressurization system of the oxidizer tank in the central block of the rocket.

Thursday's launch is the fourth for the Angara-A5, a heavy-lift version of the new Angara family of rockets that has been developed to replace the Soviet-designed Proton rockets.

The previous three launches were carried out from the Plesetsk launchpad in northwestern Russia.

Russia's new heavy-lift rocket finally takes off

China launches Queqiao-2 for lunar missions

BEIJING, April 13, (Agencies): The Queqiao-2 satellite has recently completed in-orbit communication tests, with its platform and payloads working normally, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA) on Friday.

The functions and performance of Queqiao-2 meet mission requirements, and it can provide relay communication services for the fourth phase of China's lunar exploration project and future lunar exploration missions of China and other countries, said the CNSA, announcing the Queqiao-2 mission a complete success.

The satellite successfully completed a communication test on April 6 with Chang'e-4, which is now carrying out an exploration mission on the far side of the moon. From April 8 to 9, it conducted communication tests with the Chang'e-6 probe, which is yet to be launched.

Queqiao-2 was launched on March 20 and entered its target highly elliptical orbit on April 2 after midway correction, near-moon braking and orbital maneuver around the moon.



This photo taken by satellite bracket camera of Long March-8 carrier rocket on March 20, 2024 shows the Queqiao-2 relay satellite (center) successfully separating from the carrier rocket with its solar wing and antenna successfully unfolded. (Xinhua)

Prehistoric tomb discovered in south China

Study sheds light on mammals' early evolution

BEIJING, April 13, (Xinhua): A study led by Chinese scientists on Jurassic mammals has shed light on the early evolution of mammals, according to the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology (IVPP) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

There are two important morphological and functional changes in the evolution from reptiles to mammals, one is the transformation of teeth from simple to complex to improve feeding capacity, the other is the transformation of the mandibular skull joint into

middle ear ossicular combination to improve auditory effectiveness.

An international research team led by the IVPP studied Jurassic mammal fossils from north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and southwest China's Yunnan Province, had revealed the earliest evolution of tooth, middle ear and jaw joint in mammals.

Also:

NANNING: A tomb dating back 30,000 to 40,000 years has been found in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Au-

tonomous Region, according to local authorities.

The tomb was unearthed at the Fengyan relics site, which is located in a cave on the east side of the Luohan mountain in the region's Liuzhou City, according to the city's cultural relics protection and archaeological research center.

The excavation started in early June and ended in late November last year, with the excavation area covering about 50 square meters. One tomb, 27 fire remains, one human activity surface and three ash pits were found.

Physicist Peter Higgs, father of Higgs Boson theory, dies at 94

LONDON, April 13, (AP): Nobel prize-winning physicist Peter Higgs, who proposed the existence of the so-called "Higgs boson" that helped explain how matter formed after the Big Bang, has died at age 94, the University of Edinburgh said Tuesday.

The university, where Higgs was emeritus professor, said he died Monday following a short illness.

Higgs predicted the existence of a new particle, which came to be known as the Higgs boson, in 1964. He theo-

retized there must be a subatomic particle of certain dimension that would explain how other particles - and therefore all the stars and planets in the universe - acquired mass. Without something like this particle, the set of



Higgs

equations physicists use to describe the world, known as the standard model, would not hold together.

Higgs' work helps scientists understand one of the most fundamental riddles of the universe: how the Big Bang created something out of nothing 13.8 billion years ago. Without mass from the Higgs, particles could not clump together into the matter we interact with every day.

But it would be almost 50 years before the particle's existence could be

confirmed. In 2012, in one of the biggest breakthroughs in physics in decades, scientists at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, announced that they had finally found a Higgs boson using the Large Hadron Collider, the \$10 billion atom smasher in a 17-mile (27-kilometer) tunnel under the Swiss-French border.

The collider was designed in large part to find Higgs' particle. It produces collisions with extraordinarily high energies in order to mimic some of the conditions

that were present in the trillionths of seconds after the Big Bang.

Higgs won the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physics for his work, alongside Francois Englert of Belgium, who independently came up with the same theory.

Edinburgh University Vice Chancellor Peter Mathieson said Higgs, who was born in Newcastle, was "a remarkable individual - a truly gifted scientist whose vision and imagination have enriched our knowledge of the world that surrounds us."

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# T-wolves move into three-way tie for West top spot



Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green, left, and New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson (1) compete for a rebound during the first half of an NBA basketball game Friday, April 12, 2024, in San Francisco. (AP)

## Cavaliers clinch playoff berth

**MINNEAPOLIS, April 13, (AP):** Rudy Gobert had 25 points, 19 rebounds and five blocks to help the Minnesota Timberwolves defeat the Atlanta Hawks 109-106 on Friday night and move into a three-way tie for first place in the Western Conference.

Minnesota is even with Denver and Oklahoma City atop the conference with one game to play. The Timberwolves hold head-to-head tiebreakers over both teams, but the Thunder would win a three-way tiebreaker for the top spot. So, a victory by Minnesota over Phoenix and a loss by either Denver or Oklahoma City would lock up the top seed for the Timberwolves.

### Cavaliers 129, Pacers 120

In Cleveland, Donovan Mitchell scored 33 points, Jarrett Allen had 29 points and 13 rebounds and Cleveland clinched a playoff berth with a victory over Indiana.

Indiana pulled to 120-118 with 2:04 remaining on Pascal Siakam's drive, but Darius Garland answered with a 3-pointer over Siakam. The Cavaliers scored the final six points, capped by an Isaac Okoro three-point play that ended with him somersaulting.

Tyrese Haliburton had 19 points and 12 assists, Siakam scored 19 points and Myles Turner had 17 points for the Pacers, who can still qualify for the playoffs with a win or a Philadelphia loss on Sunday. Indiana had won three straight.

### Heat 125, Raptors 103

In Miami, Nikola Jovic scored 22 points, Jaime Jaquez Jr. had 20 points and nine assists, and Miami kept hope alive of escaping the play-in tournament by topping Toronto.

## BASKETBALL

Bam Adebayo scored 19 points, Tyler Herro scored 18, and Jimmy Butler and Kevin Love each scored 14 for the Heat (45-36). Miami still could get out of the play-in with a win in a rematch against the Raptors on Sunday and some help.

### Spurs 121, Nuggets 120

In San Antonio, Devonte' Graham converted a floater in the lane with 0.9 seconds remaining, and San Antonio handed Western Conference-leading Denver a potentially damaging loss, rallying from 23 points down.

The Nuggets (56-25) fell out of sole possession of first place in the West and into a tie with Minnesota and Oklahoma City. Because of tiebreakers, the Timberwolves were first, the Thunder second and the Nuggets third heading into the final day of the regular season on Sunday.

### Lakers 123, Grizzlies 120

In Memphis, LeBron James had 37 points, including six in the final minute, and 10 rebounds and Anthony Davis had 36 points and 14 rebounds as Los Angeles beat the short-handed Memphis.

Davis, returning from a left eye injury that kept him out of the Lakers' loss to Golden State on Tuesday, was 11 of 22 in this game. James shot 13 for 20 to help the Lakers snap a two-game losing streak.

### Suns 108, Kings 107

In Sacramento, Kevin Durant scored 28 points, Jusuf Nurkic made a late free throw and Phoenix rallied to beat Sacramento.

With the game tied at 107 after Phoenix overcame a 16-point deficit, Domantas Sabonis fouled Nurkic fighting for the rebound off a missed shot by the Suns' Grayson Allen. Nurkic, who finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds, missed the first, but made the second to give the Suns the lead with 8.1 seconds to play.

### Pelicans 114, Warriors 109

In San Francisco, CJ McCollum hit a 3-pointer with 1:03 remaining to help seal it and scored 28 points, Zion Williamson had 26 and New Orleans boosted their playoff positioning by beating Golden State.

Trey Murphy III converted a pair of free throws with 9 seconds left and finished with 24 points and eight rebounds for New Orleans.

### 76ers 125, Magic 113

In Philadelphia, Joel Embiid had 32 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists after an apparent injury scare in the first half and Philadelphia beat Orlando.

Tyrese Maxey scored 28 points and Kelly Oubre Jr. added 21 as Philadelphia (46-36) won its seventh straight game and moved into a tie with Orlando for the sixth seed in the East. The Sixers and Magic are a half-game behind Indiana for the No. 5 seed. The Pacers played Cleveland on Friday night.

### Jazz 110, Clippers 109

In Los Angeles, Reserve Kenneth Lofton Jr. scored a season-high 27



Houston Rockets guard Aaron Holiday, center, shoots as Portland Trail Blazers center Moses Brown, right, defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game Friday, April 12, 2024, in Portland, Ore. (AP)

points and Utah beat the Los Angeles Clippers.

Bones Hyland led the Clippers with 20 points off the bench and Amir Coffey added 16.

Clippers star Kawhi Leonard missed his seventh straight game with right knee inflammation and is unlikely to return before the playoffs start next weekend.

### Knicks 111, Nets 107

In New York, Jalen Brunson had 30 points and 11 assists after a slow start, OG Anunoby scored all of his 15 points in the third quarter and New York beat Brooklyn, clinching home-court advantage in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Josh Hart added 16 points and Mitchell Robinson also had 15 for the Knicks, who guaranteed themselves a top-four finish in the East and remained in the hunt for the No. 2 seed. They entered play a game behind Milwaukee for second in the East. The Bucks were playing at Oklahoma City later Friday without Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard.

### Thunder 125, Bucks 107

In Oklahoma City, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 23 points and Oklahoma City beat injury-depleted Milwaukee to boost their hopes of taking the No. 1 seed in the Western Conference playoffs.

The Bucks played Friday without All-Stars Giannis Antetokounmpo and Damian Lillard. They already had announced Wednesday that Antetokounmpo would miss the rest of the regular season with a strained left calf. Lillard was out with a sore left adductor. Milwaukee fell to 4-4 in games without Antetokounmpo this season.

Chris Middleton and Brook Lopez each scored 18 points for Milwaukee.

### Celtics 131, Hornets 98

In Boston, Payton Prichard scored a career-high 31 points and the Boston Celtics rolled to a 131-98 win over the Charlotte Hornets.

Prichard added 11 assists for his second double-double this season and helped the Celtics avoid losing three consecutive games for the first time this season.

Luke Kornet finished with 16 points and 10 rebounds, and Sam Hauser and Neemias Queta both also had 16 points for Boston, which led by as many as 33.

### Bulls 129, Wizards 127

In Washington, rookie Adama Sanogo had 22 points and 20 rebounds to shatter his career highs and help short-handed Chicago beat Washington.

Chicago coach Billy Donovan gave starters DeMar DeRozan, Nikola Vucevic and Alex Caruso the night off after clinching the ninth seed in the Eastern Conference on Thursday night with a victory in Detroit.

Javonte Green added 24 points, Jevon Carter had 20 points and 12 assists and Torrey Craig finished with 11 points and 15 rebounds. The Bulls won two straight for the first time in nearly a month.

### Pistons 107, Mavericks 89

In Dallas, Marcus Sasser scored 24 points in his hometown return, including 13 straight points during a stretch of the third quarter, and Detroit beat Dallas.

The Pistons (14-67) led for most of the night against a Mavericks team that had won five consecutive games and 16 of 18 to secure a playoff spot.

Chimezie Metu scored 18 points for Detroit, matching a career high with four 3-pointers.

### Rockets 116, Trail Blazers 107

In Portland, Jalen Green had 26 points and Houston spoiled Portland's final game at home this season.

Aaron Holiday came off the bench to score 18 points while Amen Thompson had 17 points and 15 rebounds for Houston, which was already eliminated from playoff contention.

Scot Henderson had 30 points for the Blazers, who have lost four in a row and 14 of their last 16 with one game left. Portland was second-to-last in the Western Conference.

## Perenara equals Super Rugby try-scoring record

# Hurricanes beat Chiefs 36-23 to stay unbeaten

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, April 13, (AP): Former All Blacks scrumhalf T.J. Perenara scored two tries to equal the tournament's all-time try-scoring record as the Wellington-based Hurricanes beat the Hamilton-based Chiefs 36-23 on Saturday to stay unbeaten through eight rounds of Super Rugby Pacific.

Perenara scored in the 17th minute as the Hurricanes used an overwhelming scrum advantage early to build a 17-7 lead and again in the 58th minute, after the Chiefs had rallied to go ahead 23-17.

In a late match at Melbourne, Australia, the host Rebels beat the Dunedin, New Zealand-based Highlanders 47-31. It was the Rebels' fifth win in eight matches this season and the first time the team has won three consecutive matches since August 2020.

## RUGBY

Conceding penalties and turning over possession with bad passes, the Hurricanes helped the Chiefs back into the match. They scored a try through scrumhalf Cortez Ratima and then closed the gap on the Hurricanes with penalties to Damian McKenzie, even with winger Emoni Narawa in the sin-bin.

Again at the start of the second half, the Chiefs looked more composed than the Hurricanes, advancing the ball well through one-off runners, occasionally using offloads to stretch the defense and with McKenzie kicking effectively.

Back from the sin-bin, Narawa scored the Chiefs' second try and gave them a six-point lead.

But near the start of the last quarter, the tide switched again and the Hurricanes won back the lead through Perenara who drew level with former Hurricanes winger Julian Savea on 62 career tries.

Then winger Kini Naholo scored at the end of a sweeping movement of more than a dozen phases. And hooker Asafo Aumua, whose bruising ball-carrying had been a feature of the match, brushed off one tackler and carried three more over the line to score the Hurricanes' fourth try.

"It's pretty obvious our discipline at times put us at the wrong end of the field and the Chiefs are a good team and will capitalize on that," Hurricanes captain Brad Shields said. "I'm pretty happy with the way we defended at times and our bench came on and changed the game for us."

## Japan, Australia and Slovakia win

# Iga leads Poland to Billie Jean King Cup Finals

LONDON, April 13, (AP): No. 1-ranked Iga Swiatek clinched a berth for Poland in the Billie Jean King Cup Finals by defeating Switzerland's Celine Naef 6-4, 6-3 on Saturday to take an insurmountable 3-0 lead in the best-of-five-match qualifying round.

Swiatek - who has claimed Grand Slam titles at the French Open and one at the U.S. Open - also won her opening singles match on an indoor hard court at Biel, Switzerland, on Friday.

## TENNIS

Japan, Australia and Slovakia were among the countries that advanced Saturday to the Finals, which will be held in Seville, Spain, in November.

Japan went ahead 3-0 over Kazakhstan without needing four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka to play a second match on an indoor hard court in Tokyo.

That's because Nao Hibino beat Kazakhstan's Yulia Putintseva 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7) on Saturday, after Osaka's win against Putintseva on Friday helped the hosts go up 2-0.

Slovakia moved into the Finals when 16-year-old Renata



Naomi Osaka of Japan returns a shot against Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan during their Billie Jean King Cup tennis match in Tokyo. (AP)

Jamrichova defeated Veronika Erjavec 6-2, 6-0 on an indoor hard court in Bratislava to give the hosts a 3-0 edge over visiting Slovenia.

Australia went up 3-0 over Mexico on an outdoor hard court in Brisbane thanks to Taylah Preston's 6-1, 6-1 victory over Marcela Zacarias.

The eight winners in qualify-

ing will join defending champion Canada, 2023 runner-up Italy, host Spain and wild-card selection Czech Republic in the 12-country Finals field.

Heading into Saturday, 2021 U.S. Open champion Emma Raducanu and Britain were tied 1-1 with France, the United States led Belgium 2-0, Ukraine led Romania 2-0, and Germany was ahead of Brazil 2-0.



Carter Gordon of the Rebels, right, is tackled by Highlanders' defenders during their Super Rugby Pacific Round 8 match in Melbourne, Saturday, April 13, 2024. (AP)

# Fraser-McGurk hits half ton on debut as Delhi beats Lucknow

LUCKNOW, India, April 13, (AP): Australian batter Jake Fraser-McGurk scored a half century on his IPL debut as Delhi Capitals beat Lucknow Super Giants by six wickets with 11 balls remaining.

The 22-year old Fraser-McGurk smacked 55 runs off only 35 balls, including five sixes, as Delhi scored 170-4 in 18.1 overs in reply to Lucknow's 167-7.

Delhi wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav returned from injury to pick up 3-20 in four overs and helped to restrict the hosts to a sub-par total.

Opting to bat first on a spin-friendly wicket, Lucknow made a decent start with openers Quinton de Kock (19) and skipper Lokesh Rahul putting on 28 runs off 17 balls.

## CRICKET

Rahul hit 39 off 22, with five fours and one six, even as Lucknow started to lose wickets regularly at the other end. Left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed provided

a double breakthrough by trapping both de Kock and Devdutt Padikkal (3) leg before wicket.

Yadav ran through Lucknow's middle order. He had Marcus Stoinis caught for eight, and bowled Nicholas Pooran for a golden duck but missed his chance of a hat trick. Lucknow was down to 77-5 in 9.3 overs after Rahul was caught behind off Yadav.

Impact substitute Deepak Hooda fell for 10, while Krunal Pandya (3) couldn't make much impact either.

Ayush Badoni came to the rescue with a

timely 55 not out off 35 balls. He hit five fours and one six and helped his team to an improbable 160-plus total.

In reply, Delhi lost opener David Warner when pacer Yash Thakur bowled the Australian for eight runs.

Prithvi Shaw (32) and Fraser-McGurk shared 39 runs for the second wicket. Shaw was out to leg spinner Ravi Bishnoi (2-25) but Fraser-McGurk kept Delhi moving along. The highlight came in the 13th over when he smacked Pandya for three successive sixes. His half-century came off 31 balls.

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## SPORTS

## Ali Al-Kharafi leads the pack in Equestrian league

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The sixth round of the Kuwait Equestrian Federation League Championship commenced at the Al-Masila Club track in the Subhan area, featuring riders representing local clubs. Today, competitions across various heights including 90 cm, 105-110 cm, 120 cm, 130 cm, and 140 cm are underway, the event continued with rounds set at 125 cm and 135 cm, culminating in the grand prize competitions at 145 cm and 115 cm heights.

## EQUESTRIAN

The tournament enjoys sponsorship from Zain, KGL, and Kuwait International Bank.

Leading the knights' standings is Kuwait Club's star rider, Ali Al-Kharafi, with an impressive 122 points. He's followed by Fawaz Al-Sabai of Subhan Club (67 points), Yara Al-Hunaidi (64 points), and Ghazi Al-Jariwi (60 points), both representing Kuwait Club. At the club level, Kuwait Equestrian Club reigns supreme with 522 points, trailed by Hawalli Club (338 points) and Subhan



The league leader Ali Al-Kharafi celebrates.

Club (235 points).

The league's culmination is set for the seventh and final round scheduled for May 4th.

## Al-Qadisiya, Kuwait Club resume training, preparing for the season's 'home stretch'

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait Club have recommenced their training sessions following the conclusion of the Eid Al-Fitr holiday, gearing up for the remaining competitions of the ongoing 2023-2024 season.

## SOCCER

The two teams are slated to face off on April 27 in the fourth round of the Zain Premier League championship group. "Al-Abyad" currently holds the top spot in the standings with 50 points, while Al-Qadisiya sits third with 46 points.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Club is anticipating responses from clubs as it plans to engage in two friendly matches during the league's suspension period. This initiative, led by Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, aims to provide opportunities for players who were previously unable to participate in matches, assessing their readiness before league action resumes in



A file photo of Al-Qadisiya and Kuwait Club players in action during a league match.

pursuit of maintaining the title.

Conversely, Al-Qadisiya is scheduled to play a friendly match against Khaitan next Wednesday, with another match lined up for the following Sunday, pending confirmation from Al-Jahra.

Coach Mohammed Al-Mashaan of Al-Qadisiya is keen on utilizing this break effectively to ensure his players are well-prepared, as they strive to contend for a title that has eluded the club for several years.

## Augsburg edge closer to European spot with victory over Union Berlin

Mikautadze double boosts Metz in relegation fight

BERLIN, April 13, (AP): Phillip Tietz scored his eighth goal of the season and Sven Michel netted against his former club to give Augsburg a 2-0 win over Union Berlin in a lackluster Bundesliga encounter.

Tietz seized on a poor back pass and managed to squeeze his shot under the despairing goalkeeper Frederik Rønnow to give Augsburg the lead two minutes into the second half.

Michel finished well after a one-two with Arne Maier nine minutes from time to guarantee all three points for the home side.

The win edged Augsburg closer to the top six and a place in next season's European competitions. It currently sits in seventh, three points behind Eintracht Frankfurt, which has a game in hand.

Union Berlin remains 13th with 29 points. It has scored only 25 goals, the second lowest total in the league this season after second-to-last Cologne.

In Paris, Georges Mikautadze's



Lazio's Taty Castellanos, (left), challenges for the ball with Salernitana's Jerome Boateng during the Serie A soccer match between Lazio and Salernitana at Rome's Olympic Stadium, Rome, Italy. (AP)

first-half double gave Metz a 2-1 come-from-behind win over Lens on Friday and secured three vital points for the home club in its bid to avoid relegation from France's top tier.

It was Metz's first win after three consecutive defeats. Although it remains second-to-last, Metz is now level on 26 points with Lorient, the team immediately above it.

Nantes and Le Havre have 28 points, and Clermont is last with 21. The bottom two teams go down and the team in 16th place enters a relegation playoff.

## SOCCER

Florian Sotoca put Lens ahead from the penalty spot after 13 minutes following a trip on Wesley Said but Mikautadze equalized 11 minutes before halftime when he created space for himself in a packed penalty box and fired an unstoppable shot high into the net.

On the stroke of halftime the Georgian took advantage of sloppy defending - and quick thinking by teammate Kevin N'Doram - to put Metz ahead. The Lens defense was caught in possession as it tried to play the ball out and N'Doram stabbed the ball forward to Mikautadze, who coolly lifted the ball over the advancing 'keeper to make it 2-1.

The result was a blow to Lens, which would have gone fifth above Nice with a win. It remains in sixth place, a point

behind Nice and three ahead of Reims.

In Rome, Lazio players were booed by their own fans but they restored some pride after a recent poor run to beat bottom club Salernitana 4-1 and climb to seventh place in the Italian league.

The capital club came into the match on the back of losses to rivals Juventus and Roma and fans displayed a banner reading "You Are Not Worthy Of Wearing Our Shirt" before the game.

Recently appointed coach Igor Tudor was without a number of top players, Ciro Immobile and Matteo Guendouzi among them, but the home side showed character and was 2-0 up within 14 minutes against a team that has not won a game since December last year.

Felipe Anderson opened the scoring with a solo goal after just six minutes and then Matias Vecino doubled Lazio's lead eight minutes later.

Loum Tchouaou pulled one back for the visitors two minutes later with a powerful header but Anderson restored the two-goal cushion when he finished off an intricate passing move 10 minutes before the break.

Danish winger Gustav Isaksen completed the rout three minutes from the final whistle just seconds after coming on as a substitute.

## Kuwait Club, Kazma square off in handball league showdown



Kuwait Club player sandwiched by two opponents in this file photo.

By Khaled El Anzi

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: Tonight, at 7:00 PM, all eyes will be fixed on the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Complex hall, as the tenth round of the Handball League unfolds. The spotlight shines on the clash between Kuwait Club and Kazma, both vying for second and third place with 14 points each.

Prior to the pivotal Dean versus Al-Safir match, another significant showdown awaits between Al-Sulaibikhat (sixth place with nine points) and Al-Fahaheel (seventh place with eight points). Al-Sulaibikhat seeks to build on recent victories over Al-Sahel and Al-Yarmouk, despite a setback against Kazma, while Al-Fahaheel aims to bounce back after a defeat to Al-Arabi, following a win over Al-Qurain.

In the anticipated summit clash,

both teams boast similar records, having triumphed in their last three outings but suffering inaugural losses in the league - "Al-Abyad" to Al-Qadisiya, and "Orange" to Al-Arabi. With equal points and matches played, victory becomes paramount for either side, especially given their fewer games compared to Al Salmiya, the current frontrunner with 15 points after nine matches.

## HANDBALL

Tonight's showdown will be a test of coaching prowess, featuring Haitham Al-Rashidi of "Sons of Kaifan" against Serbian tactician Bozo Rodic of "Sons of Al-Adaliya". The coach who adeptly harnesses player potential and dictates the game's tempo stands poised to secure two crucial points.

## Top basketball teams clash in semifinals

By Hassan Musa

Al-Seyassah/Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, April 13: The basketball league semi-finals are set to ignite, featuring two thrilling matchups at Al-Itihad Hall in the Sheikh Saad Al-Abdullah Indoor Hall Complex.

In the opening clash at 6:30 pm, Kuwait Club squares off against Al-Arabi, while the second match at 8:30 pm sees Al-Qadisiya take on Kazma. Both encounters adhere to a playoff system of three matches, with the victors of two advancing to the final, which follows the same format.

## BASKETBALL

Defending champion Kuwait Club aims to extend its winning streak this season against Al Arabi, led by German coach Peter Schumers. Meanwhile, under Tunisian coach Nidal Ben Abdelkarim, Al-Arabi seeks to upset the reigning champion, boasting an impressive performance despite not securing a semi-final victory yet.

In the second match, Al-Qadisiya and Kazma stand on equal footing, despite Kazma's prior victories over Al-



Kuwait Club player dictates play.

Qadisiya this season. Kazma, bolstered by American New Williams, seeks redemption against Yellow, while Al-Qadisiya, reinforced by American Tailimon, aims to compensate for the absence of compatriot Elonoy due to injury.

Anticipation runs high as these teams vie for a spot in the league final, promising an evening of intense basketball action.

## Best of the Rest

**Rojas tears Achilles tendon:** Olympic triple jump champion Yulimar Rojas tore her left Achilles tendon and said she will miss this year's Paris Games.

The 28-year-old Venezuelan said on her Instagram account that she was injured while training in Spain. She said she had surgery in Madrid on Thursday.

"My heart is broken, and I want to apologize for not being able to represent you (Venezuelans) in Paris 2024," said Rojas, the world record holder in the event.

Rojas last competed in September when she won the Diamond League. She missed the world indoor championships in Scotland in March.

"I wanted to defend my Olympic title and I was looking forward to it, but I must stop now, understand this, recover and return at full strength to keep flying together," Rojas said.

Rojas set the world record at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 with a jump of 15.67 meters and increased that to 15.74 a year later in an indoor arena in Serbia. Rojas won a bronze medal in the triple jump at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Rojas is also a four-time world champion, winning the triple jump in 2017, 2019, 2022 and 2023, as well as a three-time world indoor champion. (AP)

**Probe expanded:** The investigation into corruption inside the Spanish soccer federation under former president Luis Rubiales has been expanded to include his successor, Pedro Rocha, a Madrid-based court said.

The investigating judge decided to officially consider Rocha to be under investigation after hearing testimony from him on Friday.

Rocha told local media when leaving the court that his "conscience is clear."

Rocha took over as interim federation president after Rubiales stepped down in September, weeks after he became a national embarrassment for kissing a player without her consent during the Women's World Cup awards ceremony.

Rocha resigned from his interim post last week upon announcing that he would run for the permanent federation presidency in upcoming elections. (AP)



Augsburg's Arne Maier (left), and Union Berlin's Brenden Aaronson challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between Union Berlin and Augsburg, at the WWK-Arena in Augsburg, Germany. (AP)

## 40 years after competing in Los Angeles

## Venezuelan shooter returns to the Olympics at age 60

CARACAS, Venezuela, April 13, (AP): It's been a while - 40 years to be exact - since Venezuelan trap shooter Leonel Martínez last competed at the Olympics.

He was only 20 when he took part in the Los Angeles Games in 1984, but says he's in better shape now, at 60, as he prepares to compete in Paris after the second-longest gap between Olympic appearances in history.

"I give very little relevance to the number," Martínez told The Associated Press about his age. "Now I feel better than when I was 20 years old. Now I am much more confident than when I was 25 years old."

Only Japanese dressage rider Hiroshi Hoketsu waited longer to return to the Olympics. He first competed in Tokyo in 1964 and returned to the Games in Beijing in 2008.

Martínez, who is from Ciudad Ojeda in the western oil state of Zulia, didn't intend to wait this long. After finishing 41st out of 70 in Los Angeles, Martínez was planning to compete at the Seoul Games in 1988 but was absorbed with personal and business commitments.

He started a company that manufactured disposable medical supplies such as scrubs and met his wife-to-be Magaly Chacín. The couple had two children.

But he sensed something was missing in his life. Almost three decades after his



Martínez

retirement from the sport, Martínez decided to pursue his dream again.

"Something awakened in me. There was a new spark in my life," Martínez said in an interview at a hotel in Venezuela's capital of Caracas.

He returned to the sport in 2011 when he qualified for the Pan American Games in Guadalajara, México.

## OLYMPICS

Another trap shooter from South America became his inspiration. Francisco Boza, the Peruvian who won the silver medal in that discipline in Los Angeles in 1984, convinced Martínez that age was just a "state of mind."

Martínez was amazed in 2015 when he saw Boza, who was 50 at the time, win a gold medal at the Toronto Pan-American

Games, beating opponents half his age.

It took several years to start attaining success in regional competitions and get his confidence back.

Martínez secured his spot in Paris after winning the silver medal at the Pan-American Games in Santiago, Chile, last year. He missed gold by one point to Jean Pierre Brol, a 41-year-old from Guatemala.

"Why did so many people fail to make their dreams and goals come true? It's because they easily gave up," Martínez said. "You have to persevere. The more you try, the closer you get to reaching that goal." Martínez was practically born into the sport.

He was a teenager when his father, Alonso Martínez, who also competed internationally, started to let him use his guns to learn trap shooting - a discipline that requires accuracy to repeatedly aim at clay targets in split-second times.



Luton Town's Carlton Morris, (centre), heads the ball ahead of Manchester City's Matheus Nunes, (left), and Manchester City's Ruben Dias, (right), during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester City and Luton Town at Etihad stadium in Manchester, England. (AP)

# Sports

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## Newcastle deal blow to Spurs top-4 hopes

Isak scores twice in 4-0 win

**NEWCASTLE, England, April 13, (AP):** Newcastle handed Tottenham another drubbing at St. James' Park as Alexander Isak's double helped secure a 4-0 win for Eddie Howe's team in the Premier League on Saturday.

Isak and Anthony Gordon both scored within 95 seconds of each other in the first half as Newcastle followed up last season's 6-1 home win over Spurs with another dominant performance to damage Tottenham's hopes of a top-four finish.

Isak, who also scored twice in that big win last April, capped a stellar performance with a second goal in the 51st minute to take his tally to 17 in the league and 21 overall this season. Gordon added his second assist of the game with a corner that was headed home by Fabian Schär for the fourth goal in the 87th.

Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou, who took charge after last season, had said this week that he had not studied the tape of the 6-1 loss and he probably won't want to watch this one back, either.

Tottenham's defense fell apart re-

peatedly and star center back Micky van de Ven was partially at fault for the first two goals as he slipped both times and let Isak and Gordon go past him inside the area. Gordon had set Isak up for the opener in the 30th minute and then netted the second himself in the 32nd after pouncing on a poor ball from Tottenham right back Pedro Porro back toward his own goal.

The third came when Bruno Guimarães helped Newcastle win possession just outside its own area and then launched a long ball up the pitch for the speedy Isak to run onto. The striker made no mistake when one-on-one with goalkeeper Vicario, calmly slotting the ball inside the far post.

Isak has now scored in six straight league home games and became the first Newcastle player since Alan Shearer in 2003-04 to reach 20 goals in all competitions in a topflight season.

### SOCCER

Schär was then left open to head home Gordon's corner from eight yards out to cap the rout.

The big loss meant Tottenham dropped below Aston Villa into fifth, behind Unai Emery's side on goal difference.

Newcastle is sixth, 10 points behind Villa and Tottenham.

Jürgen Klopp says Liverpool "lost the plot" in a 3-0 defeat to Atalanta.

The rout at Anfield in the first leg of the Europa League quarterfinals on Thursday night has muffled treble talk - for the time being, anyway.

The Reds now need to turn the page to ensure they don't fall behind in the Premier League title race - currently their best chance for more silverware in Klopp's final season.

"We played a bad game, we deserved to lose and we must feel that now. But the boys have exactly this night to feel bad about it and then we have to build up again for the Crystal Palace game, so that's how it is," Klopp said in his postmatch news conference.

Liverpool hosts Palace on Sunday a couple of hours before first-place Arsenal faces Aston Villa in north London. Klopp and Mikel Arteta's team are tied on points but Arsenal leads on goal difference. Manchester City is



LOYAC AC Milan Academy celebrates with the Youth Peace Championship title.

### LOYAC AC Milan Academy claims Youth Peace Championship title

The International Youth Peace Championship title was clinched by LOYAC AC Milan Football Academy following the recently concluded tournament in Rovereto, Italy.

Faisal Ahmed Al-Haroun, General Director of LOYAC AC Milan Academy, expressed immense pride in the academy team's remarkable talent and sportsmanship showcased through-

out the competition. He lauded their determination, advanced skills, and teamwork, highlighting their exceptional performance on the field. Over the course of nine matches, the team netted an impressive 38 goals while conceding only three.

This outstanding achievement, fueled by hard work and dedication, exemplifies the strong

bond and harmony between coaches and players, reflecting the academy's commitment to excellence.

Salman Al-Rashoud, General Manager of LOYACTIVE, the sports arm of the LOYAC Foundation, emphasized that LOYAC Academy's victory underscores their competitiveness on the global stage.



Newcastle United's Alexander Isak (left), controls the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Newcastle United and Tottenham Hotspur at St. James' Park in Newcastle, England. (AP)

Teams and officials arrive

## Kuwait hosts World Ice Hockey Championship Division IV



Kuwait ice hockey team intensifies training for the championship.

**KUWAIT CITY, April 13, (KUNA):** Kuwait is set to host the 2024 World Ice Hockey Championship Division IV on Tuesday, featuring four teams from Mongolia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the host nation. Taking place at the Kuwait Winter Games Club's ice skating rink in the Bayan area, the tournament spans four days.

Fahid Al-Ajmi, the club's president and head of the organizing committee, emphasized the tournament's significance, sanctioned by the In-

### ICE HOCKEY

ternational Ice Hockey Federation. It serves as a crucial stepping stone, propelling the winner to the third level in the global tournament hierarchy.

Preparations are in full swing, with the ice hall and facilities meeting international standards stipulated by the International Federation of the Game. Additionally, a new runway

has been constructed to accommodate families, enhancing the spectator experience.

Teams, federation representatives,



Winter Games Club's Head, Fahid Al-Ajmi.

referees, and technicians are slated to arrive in Kuwait starting today, with training sessions scheduled for Monday. The tournament's inaugural matches will feature Mongolia versus Indonesia, followed by the Kuwaiti national team facing off against Malaysia.

Al-Ajmi affirmed the Kuwaiti team's readiness, citing intensive training and a recent camp in Dubai. He expressed confidence in their ability to vie for the coveted title, urging fans to show their support during this national endeavor.

All tournament matches will be broadcast on Kuwait TV's sports channel, accompanied by an analytical studio, courtesy of the Ministry of Information. Al-Ajmi highlighted the organizing committee's efforts in arranging distinguished opening and closing ceremonies, ensuring the tournament's success. The General Sports Authority's support marks a significant milestone, placing Kuwaiti ice hockey on the global stage.

## Ticket sales kick off, Kuwait Olympic team 'gears up' for the AFC U-23 Cup

**DOHA, April 13:** Director of the Kuwait Olympic team, Jarrah Al-Ateeqi, shared insights into the team's rigorous training regimen at Qatar University stadiums in anticipation of the AFC U-23 Cup finals, set to take place in Qatar from April 15 to May 3.

Kuwait is in Group D alongside Vietnam, Uzbekistan, and Malaysia. Kuwait Olympic team is channeling its energies under the guidance of administrative and technical staff. Al-Ateeqi highlighted the players' dedication to adhering to instructions and their eagerness to showcase stellar performances to delight fans during the tournament.

Expressing optimism, Al-Ateeqi voiced aspirations for the team's success and urged fervent support from fans throughout the event. With 16 teams vying for supremacy, the top three will secure direct qualification for the 2024 Paris Olympics, while the fourth-placed team will contend in the global play-off.

### SOCCER

Portuguese national team coach, Emilio Peixe, curated a 25-player roster, featuring talents such as Talal Al-Qaisi, Fahd Al-Fadhli, and Saleh Al-Mahtab. However, two players are slated for exclusion by the Blues' technical staff prior to the tournament kick-off.

Meanwhile, the organizing committee for the AFC U-23 Cup unveiled ticket sales for the much-anticipated matches. Available in digital format, tickets afford fans access to the enthralling continental event's matchups.

Group stage match tickets start at 15 Qatari riyals and can be acquired via the official Hayya to Qatar mobile application. International fans can also purchase tickets through the same platform.

Emphasizing exclusivity, the committee noted that possession of the "Hayya" card is not obligatory for stadium entry, with special provisions in place for individuals with disabilities. Requests for disability-specific tickets can be made by emailing [accessibility@hayya.qa](mailto:accessibility@hayya.qa).



Kuwaiti players take a break after an intense training session.

## Australia to open F1 season in 2025 as Bahrain, Saudi races shift for Ramadan

**LONDON, April 13, (AP):** Lewis Hamilton's first race in a Ferrari will be in Australia.

Next year's Formula 1 season will open in Melbourne for the first time since 2019 after the full calendar for 2025 was revealed.

The Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne will be the opening race because the Bahrain and Saudi Arabian rounds of the F1 championship - the first two races of this year - are shifting to mid-April dates to avoid a clash with the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Next year, seven-time champion Hamilton will be starting a new era in his career when he switches to Ferrari for 2025. That will follow 12 years with Mercedes, where Hamilton has won six titles.

Australia was last scheduled

### MOTOR RACING

to host the opening race in 2020 but it was canceled hours before the Friday practice session was due to begin as the COVID-19 pandemic began.

After Australia, the next races on the 2025 calendar will be in China and then Japan, fitting F1's plans to cut the travel distance between its events where possible with an eye to the sport's environmental impact.

The schedule stays at 24 races



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton of Britain steers his car during the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix at the Suzuka Circuit in Suzuka, central Japan. (AP)